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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:
<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000a6e6>

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Doctorate in Education (EdD)

Using Songs to Enhance Language Learning and Skills in the Cypriot Primary EFL Classroom

9th APRIL 2013

Abstract

Although the role of songs in the primary EFL classroom has attracted the interest of a number of researchers (Newham 1995; McMullen and Saffran 2004; Millington 2011), given the frequency with which songs are being used in English language teaching classrooms, it might have been expected that Cyprus would wish to play a role in extending research findings and applying them to its own educational setting. Yet the lack of research with young learners is particularly acute in the Cypriot Primary School EFL context where pupils have been working for the last 15 years with very outdated textbooks. Evidence of the effectiveness of using songs to learn English has come mainly from studies in other countries mainly with older pupils in middle and high schools, (Adkins 1997; Millington 2011; Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011). My research, therefore, aims to address this gap by attempting to find out whether songs could play an important role in learning a foreign language with Cypriot learners of 9-12, an age range that has not so far been addressed in the literature. In my study, I examine the potential of songs as a valuable pedagogical tool to help young pupils learn English. More specifically, I investigate the role of songs (1) in arousing positive emotions in the primary language classroom and (2) in determining whether and to what extent positive emotions can help to reinforce the grammatical structures being taught and aid vocabulary acquisition.

Using an ethnographic case study framework, my study attempted, through the use of quantitative and qualitative methods, to assess the effectiveness of working with songs in the EFL classroom. The findings of this research revealed that the majority of pupils taking part in the study following the normal EFL curriculum which involved two 40-minute EFL lessons a week, showed considerable improvement in language learning after the use of songs. This suggested that the framework of EFL competence in Cyprus might also benefit from the implementation of songs into the current English language curriculum.

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PART I

Introducing and Situating the Research

CHAPTER 1 – Introduction

Research has shown that there is a link between music and language since both are founded on generative hierarchies which ‘start from a surface structure consisting of patterns of notes or words that make melodies or sentences’ (Jourdain 1997:277) leading to more effective learning outcomes by ‘incorporating both hemispheres of the brain throughout the *corpus collosum*, which strengthens the transmission of messages’ (Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:105). Lo and Li (1998) offer similar arguments, maintaining that songs provide a break from classroom routine, supplementing in this way a textbook or even serving as the text itself, and that learning through songs develops a classroom atmosphere in which the four skills can be enhanced. Young emphasises the need to ‘create a low anxiety atmosphere in the language class by using challenging classroom materials and effective pedagogical approaches to develop learners’ language skills’ (Young 1999:7).

The power of the emotions is underlined by Le Doux who ‘goes so far as to say that, minds without emotions are not really minds at all’ (Le Doux cited in Arnold and Brown 1999:25). In terms of negative emotions, such as foreign language (FL) anxiety, this may be of particular relevance. Many researchers (Horwitz et al. 1986; MacIntyre 1995; Young 1992) have commented on the power of anxiety to ‘negatively affect learning or performance’ (Young 1992:159). It may be then that the use of songs, given their association with positive affect, as demonstrated by researchers such as Lozanov (mentioned later in this thesis), may be instrumental in reducing anxiety and negative feelings, ‘fostering a relaxed but motivating and productive classroom atmosphere’ (Arnold and Fonseca 2004:126).

Songs, music and rhythm have been used by teachers over the years in order to aid language acquisition since according to researchers they 'have been defined as powerful aids to language learning, memory and recall' (Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:101). Since they seem to have the ability in general to affect our emotions, and given the fact that most pupils love listening to songs in their free time, it seemed logical to adopt a teaching approach which used 'continuous and efficient use of music and song inside the classroom as well' (Batista 2008:156). This study, therefore, aimed to add to existing knowledge produced by other researchers by establishing whether songs are able to create a motivating learning environment for primary English learners as effectively as they do for older learners. It also investigated whether a more productive classroom atmosphere could lead to successful learning, in particular the development of grammar and vocabulary acquisition adding to the existing relevant research (Krashen 1985; Murphey 1990; Fonseca-Mora 2000; Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011; Moreno et al. 2009). In general, it was an attempt to extend knowledge in relation to a general educational problem facing teachers today: How do we keep students motivated in order for them to learn effectively, build on what they have learned and extend both grammar and vocabulary? More specifically, can the use of songs in general, provide material which could minimize negative emotions and reinforce learning both grammar and vocabulary, capturing children's attention by 'diversifying our classroom activities and supplementing the textbook with material that we feel is appropriate and interesting for our particular context' (Arnold 1999b:274)? Through this research I have tried to find out if songs as part of classroom activities can motivate primary pupils to successfully learn English grammar and vocabulary, and also become useful tools to help teachers enhance their language teaching methodology.

Research Questions

This research project addressed the following research questions:

- (1) Can the emotional aspects of music and furthermore the lyrics of a song create a positive climate for language learning in primary EFL, and aid students' motivation?
- (2) Can the use of songs in the Cypriot primary EFL classroom reinforce the grammatical structures being taught?
- (3) Can songs create opportunities for Cypriot primary EFL learners to develop their vocabulary acquisition?

The study context

Background to the thesis

The ultimate goal in this research was to contribute to the development and improvement of my country's education system, with regard to the teaching of EFL in Primary Education. My study aimed to demonstrate how pupils can benefit from the motivational properties of songs which have been shown to 'increase sensibility, aid memory, improve concentration, help develop reading and writing abilities, favour physical development and give rise to enjoyment when learning' (Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:104).

Education is compulsory for children between 6 and 15 years of age. The language of literacy in all state schools in Cyprus is Greek, but in all state schools English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is taught, with lessons taking place twice a week in two 45-minute slots. When I started this research, EFL classes were restricted to pupils from the fourth to sixth grade of state primary schools. However, since 2011, English has been part of the curriculum from the first grade (pupils aged six). Nevertheless, despite the significant presence of English in the weekly schedule of public education, the majority of Greek Cypriot school children also take private classes in English, since the state schools are not in a position to provide them with the opportunity to gain GCE certificates that they can later present for admission to UK universities when they begin their tertiary education.

The textbooks produced by the Cypriot Ministry of Education and Culture which are currently used in the fourth, fifth and sixth grades, were adopted as teaching textbooks in state primary education in 1986 and have remained in use since then with no revisions or updates. They have a text-centred orientation, with each text followed by drills on grammar, vocabulary and spelling exercises, as well as writing prompts. The new curriculum (Autumn 2011), encourages language education to move away from the traditional grammar-centric approaches towards more communicative teaching approaches. It focuses on the communicative approach to teaching and learning language, in line with pupils' diverse learning needs and characteristics. The new curriculum aims to help pupils from a very young age to gain an adequate perception and comprehension of the English language in order to communicate effectively in the target language and develop a positive attitude towards people from other language communities.

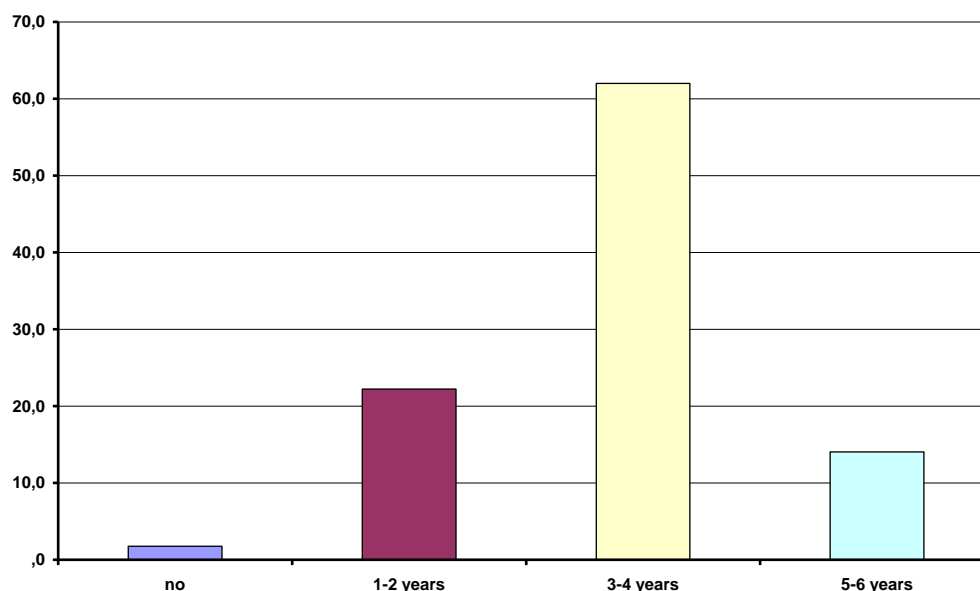
In addition to the official language of Cyprus which is Greek, English is also used in various realms of public life in Cyprus, such as courts of law, various civic services and

moreover in many fields of private enterprise. For this reason, it has been promoted as an indispensable second foreign language. It is not surprising, therefore, that students are extremely motivated to study the subject as systematically as other main subjects in the curriculum, such as Mathematics and Modern Greek, and are often sent by their parents to private institutes for extra hours of private tuition in English in the afternoon. As a result, one of the main concerns of the Ministry of Education in Cyprus is to find ways to keep children motivated in their foreign language classes at state primary schools, since the afternoon private English lessons¹, which most of the pupils attend (Figure 1.1), are reducing their motivation at school. It is hoped, therefore, that the research findings will be relevant to issues of concern or interest within the Ministry of Education, and will encourage foreign language teachers to adopt a method that will 'pay off in terms of low anxiety, high motivation, and ultimately in the ability to convey information and communicate ideas and feelings' (Young 1991:426).

¹ Students pay a great deal of money for private English lessons, which take place in the afternoon, in order to gain GCSEs or TOEFL or other certificates, since they cannot do this in the state school system. In state schools, classes are composed of pupils with different levels of competence and, as a result, the more able pupils get bored by repeating what they have already learned from their private lessons. Those who do not go to private lessons have difficulty keeping up with the work, and this puts pressure on parents to send their children to private lessons in order to maintain their standards within the school environment.

Figure 1.1 Distribution of pupils taking afternoon Private English Lessons in the school where the research took place

Number of pupils taking afternoon private English Lessons



The number of years pupils have been taking afternoon private English Lessons

I have been teaching EFL for 15 years. During that time, I have observed pupils in different emotional situations, and it seems that they perform better in a more relaxed and non-threatening environment. I have had the opportunity of teaching English using songs as a supplement to other activities in traditional lessons established over time, and have found that children are particularly motivated by songs which ‘can be used for pattern practice and memory retention’ (Griffiee 1992:6). As Arnold states, when both the affective and cognitive side of learning are used together ‘the learning process can be constructed on a firmer foundation’ (Arnold 1999a:1), so through the use of songs, lessons can be more interesting and as a result more effective. Hansen also discusses different studies which show ‘the predictable (replicable) influences of music, from harmonizing the vegetative system of the body to increasing intelligence and accelerating the development of conceptual thinking in children’ (Hansen 1999:219). Since incorporating music into the

classroom has been shown to have broadly positive effects on learning, it can ‘more effectively awaken students to language learning’ (Šišková 2008:19), and furthermore it ‘can stimulate very positive associations to the study of a language, which otherwise may only be seen as a laborious task, entailing exams, frustration, and corrections’ (Murphey 1992b:6).

Relevance of proposal

Given that education is a profoundly people-centred profession and, as Moore tells us, ‘teaching in many of its aspects as practiced today is expressive and emergent, intuitive and flexible, spontaneous and emotional’ (Moore 1999:121), teachers are called upon to make professional decisions based on the unique needs of each student, which will include their emotional needs. As foreign language teachers, we are asked to provide students with a learner-centred classroom environment ‘taking emotional and motivational variables into account’ (Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä 2008:79) in order to provide learners with the best and most appropriate learning opportunities.

According to the Centre for New Discoveries in Learning², learning potential can be increased a minimum of five times by using Mozart’s music’ (O’Donnell 1999:2).

Furthermore, as Saricoban and Metin (2000) state, ‘through using songs the language which is cut up into a series of structural points becomes a whole again’ (Saricoban and Metin 2000:1). ‘Playing music at home, in the office, or at school can help to create a dynamic balance between the more logical left and the more intuitive right hemisphere – an interplay thought to be the basis of creativity’ (Campbell 1997:66). Thus it would seem

² In 1996, the College Entrance Exam Board Service conducted a study of all students taking their SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) exams. Students who sang or played a musical instrument scored **51 points higher on the verbal portion** of the test and an average of **39 points higher on math**. At <http://www.howtolearn.com/Mozart.html>

reasonable to hypothesize that songs might also make grammar lessons and vocabulary learning more effective, profitable and interesting.

In broad terms, this study investigates whether language teaching can be made more effective by using songs to create a less structured environment within the lesson, which might increase motivation levels and lead to successful language outcomes. Since our aim as language teachers is to achieve the greatest possible amount of language gain for our learners, we need to be constantly open to new strategies in our teaching. There is currently little evidence in the literature to support the benefit songs can have on motivation and on the learning of grammar and vocabulary among younger learners. One notable exception is Fonseca-Mora who worked with pupils aged 11-13 investigating specifically whether ‘continuous auditory input provided by use of diverse musical exercises with songs and instrumental music would benefit all pupils in foreign language learning’ (Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:107) and found that using songs in language teaching can help pupils concentrate, creating a stimulating learning process ‘fostering a relaxed but motivating and productive classroom atmosphere’(Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:109). My study is one attempt to address this gap and provide relevant data to teachers who ‘seem to have grown tired of the swings and roundabouts of pedagogic fashion, and are looking for evidence before embracing the latest trend to appear in the educational market place’ (Nunan 2001b:198).

In a positive learning climate, a teacher will formulate educational goals which are within pupils’ grasp ‘so that success in achieving them will bring them greater self-confidence’ (Arnold and Brown 1999:16). As Fraenkel and Wallen (2001:21) say: ‘Many authorities have argued that a strictly structured, teacher-directed classroom may not only detract from but may even impede the learning process’, so song activities can contribute to this positive learning climate by complementing and extending the traditional learning process,

connecting amusement with learning, facilitating a more efficient ‘accumulation and manipulation of knowledge’ (McMullen and Saffran 2004:300). Keeping in mind that all students can learn and that all should be offered opportunities for success, a distinct advantage of songs is that they can be highly memorable and, as mentioned in the previous section, ‘through repeating, the grammatical structures [can] become more deeply internalized’ (Saricoban and Metin 2000:3). They should thus be a powerful tool in the hands of a teacher, providing fun and leading to positive emotions which ‘are central to fast, effective learning’ (Rinvoluceri 1999:200).

Songs also have the potential to support and develop learners’ knowledge through bringing emotional experiences from memory back into awareness. In terms of memorisation, Šišková (2008) maintains that ‘using students’ favourite songs to teach vocabulary creates endless opportunities for revision, and revision is fundamental for the storing of information in long term memory’ (Šišková 2008:28). Both songs and speech have rhythmic and melodic content, representing ‘forms of communication in a linguistic sense’ (Jolly 1975:11). In addition, they are ‘similar linguistically’ and therefore ‘represent valid material for study within the broad framework of language learning’ (Jolly 1975:12). Moreover, Halliday makes the point that you are a good speaker if you do not attract the attention of your listeners to *how* you say something, but to *what* you say. The development of pupils’ grammatical skills and vocabulary acquisition might lead us to reasonably ask whether the use of songs might have an additional benefit, that of raising the status of the spoken language. This could be the basis for future research.

Rationale

Although English has been considered to be one of the main teaching subjects after Maths and Greek in the Cypriot Education curriculum, teachers and the Ministry of Education have been seriously considering how to keep pupils motivated in their EFL lessons since, due to economical problems, they have not managed to introduce new and more attractive textbooks for the pupils to use in primary education. During these last few years teachers have constantly expressed their worries without actually finding any solutions to this problem. There has been no research concerning the ways a teacher can keep pupils motivated or how a teacher can support pupils' grammar and vocabulary learning, which emphasises the need for a more serious exploration of the problem.

A number of researchers have focused on the potential of music to bring about positive change in pupils' attitudes. Lake, for example, who studied high school pupils, mentions that 'music in the classroom can help create a warm and relaxing nest for the non-native speaker of English' (Lake 2002:2). Adkins, who studied eighth-grade pupils aged 12, refers to the way songs can help pupils 'become more receptive to language learning' (Adkins 1997:2), and Newham, who has worked with a broad range of people, mainly with professional singers and actors, talks about reintroducing 'the magical and educational activity of singing' (Newham 1995:8) in the classroom, lightening the atmosphere and arousing positive emotions. But there are no studies to date that address the development of enjoyment and motivation through the use of songs with related activities, and how could this affect the acquisition of both grammar and vocabulary among pupils of 9-12.

My intention through this study was to find out if, in this particular learning culture, an environment involving the use of songs in the classroom could help pupils become more

relaxed and attentive. I hypothesized that by creating a less structured learning setting, pupils would enjoy the language lesson as much as or more than in a traditional learning set-up, their motivation levels would increase, and that this would lead to better language learning outcomes, with regard in particular to grammar and vocabulary. Evidence from the literature has shown that songs have been successfully used in different contexts, in other countries, (Adkins 1997; Millington 2011; Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011). Millington (2011) studied how songs could be used as a useful pedagogical tool with young learners and Adkins (1997) studied how music could assist his pupils in acquiring a plethora of new vocabulary. However, these studies were of pupils in middle and high schools, and there is no research aimed specifically at those aged 9-12.

The findings of this study are intended to help EFL teachers in Cyprus and worldwide in their efforts to keep pupils motivated through implementing songs in their teaching, which will hopefully lead to more effective grammar and vocabulary learning. Although there has been some research into the use of music and songs in the EFL context in general, as already indicated and further mentioned later on in this study, this research explores the extent to which pupils in Cyprus are influenced by the use of songs and relevant activities and aims to provide teachers with a range of ideas.

Description of the setting in which evidence was collected

When I started working on this research project I was a teacher at KE' Primary School in an area in Limassol called Ekali. This is one of the biggest schools in Limassol with around 300-320 pupils from the ages of 6 (1st grade) to 12 (6th grade). The school took all the pupils from the local area and the classes were not 'streamed' by ability having classes of mixed ability pupils. As mentioned earlier, at that time (prior to 2011) English was

taught only to fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils (aged 9-12). My research was, therefore, conducted with mixed ability pupils in this age group during their regular EFL lessons. Although at this school there were younger pupils too since they were not taught English, they could not be included in this research. As a result the pupils who were involved were only the ones who were in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade and were being taught English. Pupils of these three grades were all involved in the first part of this study both in observations and questionnaires, regardless of ability and prior achievement. However, I needed to be selective with the sample taking part in the follow-up focus group discussions, in order to be able to manage the data and to avoid very large data sets that would not yield information relevant to my research questions. One focus group from each classroom which was consisted of 5-6 pupils was selected and this sample included both those who were clearly enjoying using songs in their English lessons and benefiting from the experience and those who were having problems. More details concerning the way I worked with focus groups follows in the Methodological Considerations Chapter.

Piloting was an important part of my study since it helped me to fine-tune both the research methods and the instruments for collecting data being used. The initial study's target population was a group of pupils aged 10-11 (Fifth grade) who all attended the same State primary school in Limassol, Cyprus, where the main study would be taking place. My goal as a researcher was to select a representative sample from the larger group of pupils in my town and, through studying this group, be in a position to make inferences about pupils in Cypriot schools in general. Following observation with all pupils in the group, a smaller selected sample gave me the opportunity to go into greater depth using a follow-up focus group discussion which allowed me to discuss with them their personal thoughts and worries since maybe the questionnaires with the closed questions did not allow them to express as freely as they could their ideas and thoughts. However, it was clear that the

combination of open-ended questions and qualitative data from observations and interviews would be necessary, in order to provide increased knowledge and information that would enable EFL teachers to deal appropriately with the problem of unmotivated pupils in class, and help them learn grammar and vocabulary in a more enjoyable and productive way.

My main study was conducted with fourth, fifth and sixth grade pupils aged 9-12 (Table 3.1), in the same primary school where the initial study had taken place. The reason I did not choose any other age-group was because, at the time I was working on this research, English was taught only in these primary school classes. However, from the year 2011-2012, according to the new State Primary School curriculum all pupils, starting from the first grade (aged 6), are being taught English.

The initial study participants were also included in the main study even though I had reservations about the fact that as they had already been exposed to the specific research instruments, they might be less interested in following teaching material that would have been less novel for them than for the ‘new’ participants. However, it was not possible for me to exclude them since the English lessons had to be carried out in accordance with the school curriculum, and this would have meant preventing them from attending their regular EFL lessons, which I would not have been allowed to do. In the event, results showed that this anticipated problem did not affect the main study, as evidenced by the enthusiasm all pupils showed while working with songs.

Administering, the questionnaire in exactly the same way as it would have been in the main study allowed me to identify ambiguities and to discard all unnecessary or difficult questions after completing the initial study. It also enabled me to assess the time allocated

for completion, and whether each question had an adequate range of responses to supply the information required using Greek at a level appropriate for their age range. For the main study I re-worded or re-scaled any questions that were not answered as expected and added more open questions at the end, in the form of a short open-ended questionnaire, minimizing any leading questions, so that pupils would have a chance to express themselves freely without being drawn towards specific answers

The sample for the main study was very closely representative of the larger group of pupils in Limassol, since the specific school includes both able and less able pupils and is used as a representative school by inspectors from the Ministry of Education for demonstration lessons for other teachers in the town. There were also practical considerations. The original plan had been to involve three schools in the study. However, it would not have been feasible to have different teacher-researchers observing classes, as it would have involved collecting data from a number of different teachers in different schools.

Collecting and analyzing such large amounts of data would have been very cumbersome and time-consuming, and likely to yield far more information than necessary to address the research questions. Moreover, uneven levels of commitment to the project with subsequent variation in the quality of responses would have had a negative effect on the validity of the research results. There were additional problems which I address later in this thesis. Data from the main study was collected using a mixed-method approach in order for triangulation to be achieved. This included questionnaires, focus groups, observations, and comments from both pupils' diaries and my personal journal.

In order to maximize the advantages of incorporating songs into the learning and teaching process, I selected songs appropriate to the level and grammar and vocabulary being taught, and devised linked language learning activities aiming in this way to 'turn a song

into a useful tool for language learning and teaching' (Millington 2011:137). Songs were sometimes used as a useful tool to activate the vocabulary and grammar. For example, pupils were asked to complete sentences with missing words in order to elicit either new vocabulary or practise grammar through the sentence structures of the song. Examples of the song activities can be found in Appendix C. Singing the song sometimes was part of both motivating and practising new vocabulary. Pupils performed either actions or just sang along chorally. They were also encouraged to use the vocabulary and new grammar in sentence completion.

The use of Audacity helped me to select as necessary parts of the songs I had selected. As a result, either one piece of a song or a combination of pieces from different songs could be used in different activities that could lead to the learning of new grammar or vocabulary. Furthermore a stumbling-block I encountered when dealing with the use of English songs in a foreign language was the unusual word-order, the false rhymes, and the low-frequency, archaic, or dialect words. But I was aware of this from the beginning and as a result, simple songs were chosen, characterized by 'catchy' melodies, which appealed to the age group of the target population and were easier to be remembered by pupils.

Although not all song activities required the use of computers, technology was used quite frequently, since pupils had to use movie maker, for example, in order to complete the missing sentences in a video clip, or to play games like 'musical computers' (a bit like 'musical chairs'), or simply had to complete the missing words in a written assignment by themselves using their headsets (Appendix C). They worked in pairs or sometimes on their own since they had to watch a video clip of a song and answer different questions which tested their grammar or vocabulary. Pupils' motivation might have been affected by the use of technology had it been something new to them, but the fact that they had been using

computers at school from an early age meant it was not a problem as this had always been an ongoing part of both their English language and other lessons.

Research and personal experience

According to my experience as a language teacher, creating an atmosphere in a class that promotes effective language learning will lead, as Young suggests, to ‘an attitude in our learners that reflects genuine interest and motivation to learn the language’ (Young 1991:434). My own experience of teaching has led me to believe that any language teaching method must be accompanied by natural language in order to generate fluency. Authentic materials are beneficial to the language learning process, and since they expose the learner to real language, ‘they are more natural and authentic for students’ (Domoney and Harris (1993:235). As authentic materials, ‘songs offer a change of pace in the classroom, a way of reviving flagging attention’ (Rees 1977:226), with each having ‘its particular grammatical or lexical focus which can form the basis for a short cultural grammatical or vocabulary review’ (Šišková 2008:4). Furthermore, Saricoban and Metin (2000) add that ‘songs are one of the most enchanting and culturally rich resources that can easily be used in language classrooms, offering a change from routine classroom activities’ (Saricoban and Metin 2000:1). and at the same time taking advantage of the ‘many-faceted merits songs possess may enrich and activate our foreign language class’ (Shen 2009:88). Clearly then, it would be unwise to ignore them, given that music is a unique resource of authentic language material, which can help to create a relaxed atmosphere and release a positive energy among learners that can increase motivation and retain attention.

My reading of research in the field and my own experience has led me to believe that language teachers may be missing a great deal by not exploiting songs and other rhythmic language compositions as classroom teaching aids. Language teachers would undoubtedly welcome more evidence on the effectiveness of this teaching method, in terms of 'what works with whom under what conditions and with what effects' as a means of improving the quality of what they do in classroom' (Hargreaves 1997:54). One of the aims of my research, therefore, was to give teachers ideas on integrating songs in meaningful and appropriate ways in order to help students reinforce their learning without loss of motivation. It was also expected that my experience as an EFL teacher taking part in this research would provide evidence to back up my hypothesis about the effectiveness of using songs as an explicit part of teaching methodology.

CHAPTER 2 - Literature Review

Introduction

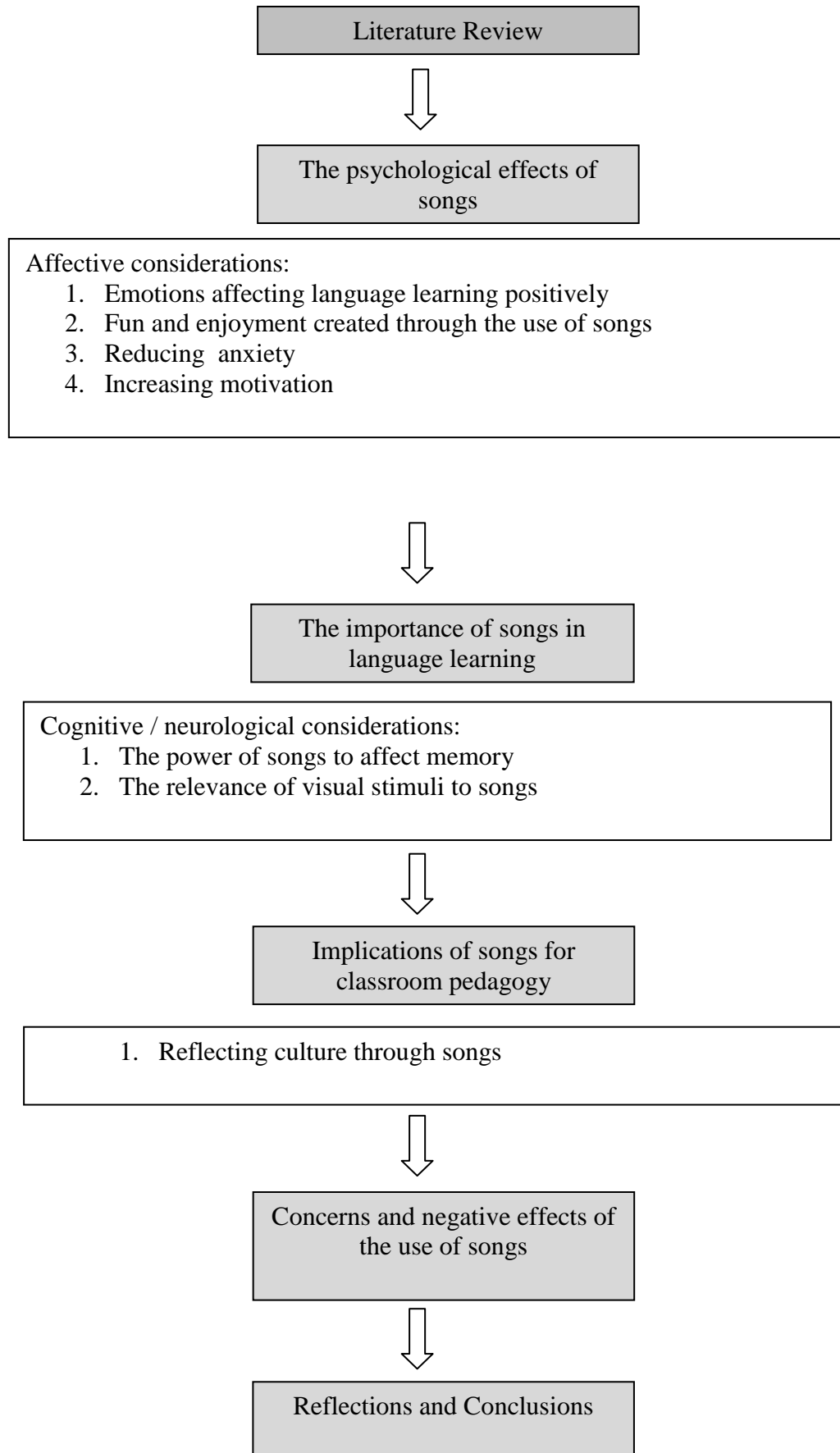
Educational research has at times been criticized on the grounds that ‘there is no theoretically based good practice which defines professional teaching. There are a number of arguments and approaches and they are in contention’ (Bassey 1995:142). We must, therefore, be aware that this research, like many other studies, is only one systematic attempt to understand the educational process and through understanding, improve its efficiency.

The literature review is considered to be ‘the foundation and inspiration for substantial, useful research’ (Boote and Beile 2005:3). My review revealed an important gap in the literature, that even though a number of researchers have explored different ways of keeping pupils interested and engaged throughout the whole learning process, the situation is constantly changing, with the result that teachers need systematically to keep abreast of the latest developments and trends in EFL theories. Interestingly, this void is even more noticeable in Cyprus where there are no studies addressing the ways an EFL teacher in a primary school can help children learn effectively and enjoyably.

In the process of conducting this literature review I came to realize the innumerable virtues songs have which deserve our attention, since ‘their richness in culture and themes, their idiomatic and poetic expressions, their therapeutic functions and so on make them an impeccable tool for language teaching’ (Shen 2009:88). I was able through a process of intensive study to explore whether these benefits could apply to the case of EFL Primary School children in Cyprus, and to develop a sound knowledge across the key themes of my thesis: firstly the influence of emotions on learning and memory and the potential of

songs to arouse positive emotions (and potentially reduce negative emotions such as anxiety) and create a positive climate for learning; and secondly the specific use of songs in the classroom to help pupils develop their grammatical competence and retain new vocabulary. I extended my literature review to cover aspects of affect, emotions, motivation, and anxiety in more depth, particularly in terms of (1) their relationship to music and in particular the use of songs in the classroom, and how they can work together to produce a positive climate for learning and (2) their relationship with cognition, as this influences language learning and memory. In this way I was able to achieve a balance with regard to the various components of my research topic. The main themes and concepts covered are set out in the table below:

Table 2.1 Main themes and concepts covered by literature review



The psychological effects of songs: Affective considerations

The first stage of my review involved an examination of the psychological effects of songs during the English language learning process, concentrating mainly on the importance of emotions as filters for controlling whether new language forms successfully flow into the language-learning system in the brain, keeping in mind that ‘students studying a foreign language respond better in a positive classroom community’ (Reid 1999:297). ‘Brain scans taken during musical performances show that virtually the entire cerebral cortex is active while musicians are playing’ (Weinberger 1998:38), while scientists add that ‘music stimulates an endorphin response which acts as an endogenous opiate – a spontaneously secreted analgesic’ (Clarke et al. 2010:120) which has the potential to lift mood, reduce tension and anxiety and raise energy levels. Since songs have the benefit of being fun, and can reduce children’s anxiety, they can also help to create an atmosphere for effective language learning and ‘an attitude in our learners that reflects genuine interest and motivation to learn the language’ (Young 1991:434).

Much of the relevant literature supporting the use of music and more specifically songs in the second language classroom comes from the area of psychology. Successful teachers should always keep in mind that they have the responsibility to articulate their pupils’ needs ‘both affective and cognitive, to summarize their styles and strategies, and to offer suggestions that are in their best language learning interests’ (Reid 1999:305). The psychological literature is rich in research on music and rote memorization since ‘music and its subcomponent, rhythm, have been shown to benefit the rote memorization process’ (Medina 2002:4). As a consequence, in this research I explored whether these widely accepted benefits could apply in the Cypriot teaching context and whether the learning of

EFL in the State Primary Schools, could be facilitated during the language acquisition process through the use of songs.

Emotions affecting language learning positively

‘Music, like language, is a universal feature across all human societies, both ancient and modern’ (Spiro 2003:661) offering a unique window onto the brain. Music and songs are a source of emotional experience for people thus ‘from a psychological perspective, an emotion is a complex response to an event of personal significance, involving cognitive appraisal’ (Clarke et al. 2010:82) and can be a factor influencing children’s attitudes. This could explain why the use of music or songs during the language learning process is attracting an increasing amount of research interest. Despite this, no studies have taken place in Cyprus dealing with the use of songs, especially with pupils in primary schools. In line with Ara (2009), who states that ‘through carefully structured input and practice opportunities, a positive learning atmosphere can be ensured in the children’s class’ (Ara 2009:163), my research investigated whether and how children could be motivated in the EFL classroom through activities linked to the use of songs, which in turn might lead to improved grammatical and vocabulary knowledge converting pupils’ ‘natural energy and enthusiasm into meaningful learning experiences’ (Ara 2009:165).

The use of music and songs ‘as a vehicle for second language learning is consistent with Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences’ (Medina 2002:3) who states that ‘each human being is capable of seven relatively independent forms of information processing, with individuals differing from one another in the specific profile of intelligences that they exhibit’ (Gardner and Hatch 1989:4). Thus implementing songs in the EFL procedure is ‘a break from classroom routine, and learning through songs develops a non-threatening classroom atmosphere in which the four skills can be enhanced’ (Bonner 2009:1). The use

of songs can also help in creating and sustaining an environment which evokes positive emotions, lowering the affective filter, and thus facilitating language acquisition.

According to Krashen's *affective filter* hypotheses (1985), emotions can influence learning. Thus in order to understand learning it is necessary to take into account the affective filter. As negative emotions can function as a filter, preventing pupils from gaining maximum linguistic input, it should be in 'the interest of the second language teacher to provide an environment which evokes positive emotions' (Medina 2002:2). This point is reinforced by Lake who maintains that 'optimum learning occurs in an environment of high motivation, self-confidence, and low anxiety' (Lake 2002:1).

Emotions are said to give us a more activated and chemically stimulated brain, helping us remember things that are emotionally laden, since 'the more intense the amygdale arousal, the stronger the imprint' (Luk 2002:3) thus a teacher should always be concerned about pupils' emotions and this could be 'the key that opens – or closes – the door to language learning' (Arnold 1999:107). Thus evoking emotions through the use of songs could stimulate and activate the brain, which could help facilitate and promote language learning. The predominant focus of research into the relationship between songs and affect in foreign language learning has tended to be on single emotions, particularly anxiety. The wider spectrum of students' experiences of emotions, including enjoyment of learning and the connection with grammar and vocabulary acquisition, has been largely overlooked. This study investigates, therefore, as one of its main areas, the problem of motivation facing pupils in the State Primary Schools in Cyprus during their EFL lessons, and the dynamic nature of emotions which could help pupils manage different forms of anxiety in order to enhance learning or achievement.

Researchers are increasingly aware of the ‘importance of emotion in language learning and teaching’ (Bown and White 2010:432). In the field of applied linguistics there has been a growing research interest in the interplay between affective and cognitive considerations. However, as Hurd points out: ‘We are becoming more knowledgeable about the importance of attention to affective factors, but there is still a huge gap in terms of our knowledge of the affective strategies that students use or could use to promote more effective language learning’ (Hurd, 2008:218). Šišková maintains that music could help in the process of learning through minimizing anxiety, and since music can positively affect language learning, songs could ‘improve the ability of the mind to recall’ (Šišková 2008:16), and, by extension, it would be reasonable to suggest, improve the ability to learn new grammatical structures and retain new vocabulary.

Different studies, for example Wolfe and Noguchi (2009), have worked with children of kindergarten age to determine whether the use of music can sustain very young pupils’ attention, since they assert that ‘attending to music is at the very core of music therapy practice and is essential to producing therapeutic outcomes’ (Wolfe and Noguchi 2009:69). Moreover, Lozanov’s system which involved the use of classical music pieces has ‘proven that foreign languages can be learned with 85%-100% efficiency in only thirty days by using these baroque pieces’ (O’Donnell 1999:2), since ‘his (Lozanov’s) students had a recall accuracy rate of almost 100% even after not reviewing the material for four years’ (O’Donnell 1999:3). Reports from both therapists and teachers focus on the potential of songs to attract and sustain attention. The results of their research demonstrate that ‘music can maintain attentiveness when children actively participate in music activities’ (Wolfe and Noguchi 2009:71) and songs can be a valuable teaching tool if ‘we exploit them creatively to bridge the gap between the pleasurable experience of listening/singing and the communicative use of language’ (Morphey 1992b:6).

Fun and enjoyment created through the use of songs

Probably the most obvious advantage of using songs in the primary classroom is that they are enjoyable and seen as a form of entertainment.. Most children and adults enjoy singing, but it is important for teachers to take on board that songs are more than just enjoyment. The relaxed atmosphere created by the implementation of songs into the EFL teaching process can make the classroom a non-threatening environment, and pupils can ‘forget they are still practicing their language skills and just enjoy themselves’ (Parker 1969:95). Songs can also be pleasant and easy to learn and use and, as a result, ‘students often think of songs as entertainment rather than study and therefore find learning English through songs fun and enjoyable’ (Millington 2011:136).

Gan and Chong query whether anything as enjoyable as songs can really be important in education. They suggest that songs can offer creative opportunities which can be ‘good for the brain and can enhance learning and intellectual development’ (Gan and Chong 1998:39). Ara further suggests that ‘although children have an innate ability to learn a language they do not learn properly if they find their lessons boring and unexciting’ (Ara 2009:168). Unfortunately, the fact that most pupils in Cyprus take extra private afternoon English lessons, makes the teacher’s task even more difficult, since teachers must attempt to provide activities which will engage their pupils, and which will ‘play an important role in children’s language and literacy development’ (Gan and Chong 1998:39), and this is no easy task in classrooms where pupils have such diverse needs and abilities.

Since most children enjoy listening to songs they can be ‘a welcome change from the routine of learning a foreign language’ (Millington 2011:134) as stated earlier by Bonner, and ‘can play an important role in the development of language in young children learning

a second language' (Millington 2011:134), helping the teacher to add to pupils' enthusiasm 'as they gain confidence' (Parker 1969:96). But, as Parker goes on to say, what is most important is that using songs can 'break the monotony of the daily practice routine'. Moreover, pupils, according to Šišková, 'relate to songs as part of entertainment rather than work' (Šišková 2008:25), and, as a result, find learning through songs amusing and stimulating rather than boring. Pop songs in particular, which are part of youth culture, can stimulate learning and improve knowledge or 'play an associative facilitating role in engaging and stimulating' (Murphey 1992a:774) pupils' interest in language learning, since, as Murphey further states, 'it's clear however that song's power to "stick" is tremendous; this may partially be due to some similarities that it enjoys with inner speech' (Murphey, 1990b:59). Millington offers another positive argument: 'One advantage of using songs in the young learners' classroom is their flexibility' (Millington 2011:134). It is clear then that songs offer a great opportunity to help pupils change their classroom routine and, as Ara maintains, 'the repetition and most importantly the fun involved in rhymes' in songs (Ara 2009:165) could increase motivation levels by providing ample opportunities to work with interesting tasks and activities. Moreover, rhymes in songs could help teachers 'convert their natural energy and enthusiasm into meaningful learning experiences' (Ara 2009:165)

Reducing anxiety

Since children learn better if they are engaged in interesting activities, our aim as teachers is to help them 'learn in an enjoyable environment without making them feel the pressure of learning a foreign language' (Ara 2009:168). This involves 'tailoring activities to the affective needs of the learner' (Young 1991:433), using classroom procedures and strategies which 'pay off in terms of low anxiety, high motivation, and ultimately in the

ability to convey information and communicate ideas and feelings' (Young 1991:426). As Horwitz et al. suggest: 'Teachers and students generally feel strongly that anxiety is a major obstacle to be overcome in learning to speak another language, and several recent approaches to foreign language teaching, such as Community Language Learning and Suggestopedia³, are explicitly directed at reducing learner's anxiety' (Horwitz et al.1986:125).

According to Yan and Horwitz (2008:153), anxiety can be a very important variable in terms of 'influencing language achievement'. It can also have a negative effect on motivation, as their study revealed: 'Some students reported that anxiety actually made them lose interest in learning English' (Yan and Horwitz 2008:161). This was reflected in the main study where participants stated through their answers both in questionnaires and focus group discussions, that anxiety could affect their performance in class and become an obstacle to learning both grammar and vocabulary. Bearing in mind Horwitz' contention that 'many people find foreign language learning especially in classroom situations, particularly stressful' (Horwitz et al.1986:125), I wanted to explore whether songs could reduce anxiety and help pupils with their language learning, through creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere which would make learning both grammar and vocabulary not only effective, but easier and more fun .

Songs can provide a purposeful diversion for learners, 'refresh their minds and unlock their creativity' (Shen 2009:89). Songs can be a great chance for reducing pupils' anxiety giving them the opportunity to work with each other, feel comfortable and more confident and this 'can result in increased participation and language learning' (Crandall 1999:227),

³ **Suggestopedia** is one of the teaching methods developed by Bulgarian psychotherapist Georgi Lozanov based on the study of Suggestology. The method has been used in different fields of studies but mostly in the field of foreign language learning. Lozanov claimed that by using this method one can teach languages approximately three to five times as quickly as conventional methods.

moving away from the more traditional, teacher-centred classrooms and helping pupils to get rid of ‘the frustration of not having adequate language to express their ideas or emotions’ (Crandall 1999:227). They may also prevent children from feeling uncomfortable or under pressure in the language class. This is particularly important given that ‘because of their short attention spans, children cannot concentrate on tedious activities for long durations’ (Ara 2009:163).

Increasing motivation

The use of songs in the EFL classrooms has the potential then to bring about effective learning by reducing pupils’ anxiety, motivating them to learn the target language. The interrelationship between anxiety and motivation is evident from the contention that ‘by reducing anxiety, songs can help increase student interest and motivate them to learn the target language’ (Millington 2011:136). Motivation has become a central concept underpinning many studies and, as Schön et al. mention in their study, ‘learning a new language, especially in the first learning phase wherein one needs to segment new words, may largely benefit from the motivational and structuring properties of music in songs’ (Schön et al. 2008:975).

As Shen states, motivation is vital in language learning and it can be ‘triggered by internal causes such as the learner’s interest, enthusiasm and desire or by external influences such as peer pressure’ (Shen 2009:90). Through reducing anxiety and boredom, the use of songs can create a positive learning state and ‘increase attention by creating short bursts of energizing excitement’ and adding ‘an element of fun’ (Adkins 1997:7). Dörnyei and Ushioda (2001:119) reinforce the need to make tasks and activities engaging: ‘Making the tasks more interesting: this is probably the best-known motivational dimension of classroom teaching, and many practitioners would simply equate the adjective

“motivating” with “interesting” ’ (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2001:119). The teaching syllabus, therefore, needs to reflect pupils’ interest, and follow the topics pupils want to learn so that ‘they regard the material they are taught as worth learning’ (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2001:116).

According to Shen ‘affective learning is also effective learning’ (Shen 2009:90). It may be, then, that engaging pupils in affective learning activities will lead to learning outcomes that include new grammar structures and new vocabulary. It is not, therefore, enough just to use songs but it is important, as can be later seen in the chapter reporting on findings, to employ a variety of interesting activities linked to songs in order, through their richness, to sustain pupils’ attention and provide purposeful activities to improve grammar and vocabulary. Songs could be teaching ‘instruments which increase sensibility, aid memory, improve concentration’ (Fonseca-Mora 2011:104). A teacher should attempt, therefore, through the use of motivational techniques, to present and administer tasks and activities through the use of songs so that even simple grammatical substitution drills can be made exciting. However given that motivation is not ‘stable but changes dynamically over time as a result of personal progress’ (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2001:198), my study required me to examine pupils’ reactions carefully throughout the whole learning process in order to record any changes in motivation related to the use of songs.

Songs in language learning: cognitive considerations

As discussed in the previous section, ‘positive emotions and attitudes can make language learning far more effective and enjoyable’ (Oxford, cited in Hurd 2008:219), and songs can indeed create positive emotions and reinforce learning. Turning to cognitive considerations, according to Adkins ‘music is a subject to be studied and appreciated as a

separate skill, but music can also be used as a means for acquiring other knowledge' (Adkins 1997:5). As MacIntyre indicates, songs 'are motivating, they touch the lives of students and grow out of their natural experiences and interests' (MacIntyre 1995:2). This is universally considered to be vital for learning since 'motivation is a complex construct which depends to a great degree on the way we evaluate the multiple stimuli we receive in relation to a specific context' (Arnold and Fonseca 2004:122). Young (1992) in her study supports the view that 'melody seems to act as a path or a cue to evoke the precise information we are trying to retrieve' and that 'music seems to leave a particularly deep trace in our memories' (Young 1992:150). Legg goes further in his contention that 'music, and the study of music, can positively influence children's overall academic achievement' (Legg 2009:1). Since music would appear to have such a significant influence on pupils' language learning, I wanted to find out if the use of songs could have the same influence on the development of learners' grammar and vocabulary.

Many studies deal with 'the notion that engagement with music is improving, even magically so' (Legg 2009:1). Many researchers such as Young (1992), Dunbar (2010), O'Donnell (1999), Fonseca-Mora et al. (2011) in applied linguistics offer a view related to this theme, stating that through music in the form of songs, students are exposed to authentic examples of second language, and that the combination of sound with word(s) aids memorization. Songs can be an ideal way of exposing students to new words repeatedly, and as repetition is one of the basic ways the brain remembers, they can help students learn and retain new structures. In psychological research, as Medina states, learning through music, rhythm and songs benefits the memorization process, since memory is enhanced 'when verbal information has been presented simultaneously with music' (Medina 1990:3).

Campbell maintains that young children when they start school have a facility for rote memory, and many facts they know have already been imprinted in their minds through songs when they were babies. Phonics are learned through a process which involves matching sounds to different objects, movements, and activities and ‘while not linear and seemingly meaningless, this process is actually essential in developing thinking skills that will last a lifetime’ (Campbell 1997:191). In addition, for young pupils to learn grammar effectively, they must be given the chance for communication beyond the classroom environment. If, as Nunan suggests, ‘learners are not given opportunities to explore grammar in context, it will be difficult for them to see how and why alternative forms exist to express different communicative meanings’ (Nunan 2001a:192). Songs give them the chance to further explore grammar in an alternative, contextualised and more meaningful way.

Bearing in mind that some teachers may adopt the unconscious habit of initiating most of the talking, which leads to a disproportionate amount of teacher talk, ways need to be found to re-balance spoken contributions between teacher and learners. Through the use of meaningful song activities, teachers can give their pupils the opportunity to get engaged in the language process given that ‘such interactions immerse learners in contextualized and contingent talk, and since these interactions are intrinsically motivating and attention focussing’ (Van Lier 2001:104), they may be effective in counterbalancing the inherent inequality of spoken contributions. Moreover, they can help learners develop their language competence by studying the grammar and vocabulary in the songs in an enjoyable way.

For Campbell, the more children are exposed to music, the better this will be for their later life. He suggests that ‘the more music children are exposed to before they enter school, the

more deeply this stage of neural coding will assist them throughout their lives' (Campbell 1997:192). He further adds that the *planum temporal*, located in the temporal lobe of the cortex which is more pronounced in musicians, is a part of the brain which 'appears to be associated with language processing and might also "categorize" sounds, suggesting a perceptual link between language and music' (Campbell 1997:192). It is interesting and important to examine what modern neuro-science has to say concerning the important role of music in our life, which 'uses more parts of the brain than any other artistic form' (Start the week: BBC Radio, 2010). The speaker further adds that almost all of the brain becomes engaged since there is a collaboration between the cognitive, logical side and the affective, emotional side.

Shen reinforces the argument that listening to English songs can be of great value in revealing learner's 'linguistic potential through enchanting melodies, varying rhythms and image-evoking lyrics, which appeal to the multidimensional development of human intelligence' (Shen 2009:90). Palmer and Kelly's (1992) study of song intonation also makes a number of claims for the natural affinity of music with language. Newham goes further in seeing a strong connection between the pattern of intonation in sentences and music, stating that 'speech without music leads to language without heart' (Newham 1995:9). Shen also points out that the combination of lyrics and rhythm can attract learners who will easily recite and long remember what they listen to, since 'singing a song by heart is more delightful and meaningful than rote learning' (Shen 2009:89). If songs can 'activate the repetition mechanism of the language acquisition device' (Murphey 1992b:7), then it seems that they could be a valuable teaching tool. However, despite the fact that songs can indeed attract pupils' interest, and, through reproducing the rhythmic patterns, learners can acquire at the same time new grammar or new vocabulary in a more enjoyable way, we have to remember that a class does not consist of identical individuals with the

same abilities and the same interests. On the contrary, a teacher, as Mercer very wisely states, has to ‘organize activities to occupy classes of disparate individuals, learners who may vary considerably in their aims, abilities and motivations’ (Mercer 2001:243). It is the teacher’s responsibility to assess pupils’ knowledge, and furthermore justify how to organise and adjust activities to their needs, rather than merely introduce songs into the classroom without careful preparation.

Part of my hypothesis was that through listening to songs or singing them, pupils could adopt affective strategies that might ‘promote more effective language learning’ (Hurd 2008:218) and as a result ‘discover’ grammatical structures and vocabulary more easily, since ‘a rich stimulating environment enables the learner to develop cognitively’ (Oxford and Shearin 1994:23). Taking also into consideration that most EFL teachers in Cyprus rely to a large extent on the Cypriot EFL course book, which is also the main source of vocabulary and grammar, and which, according to all EFL teachers is mostly outdated, using songs could be an ideal way of learning and practising grammar and vocabulary using a different and livelier technique.

Fonseca-Mora agrees that music and language should be used in tandem in the EFL classroom. She asserts that ‘verbal practice associated with musical information seems to be more memorable’ (Fonseca-Mora 2000:152); using melody with new phrases lowers the student’s anxiety; and foreign sounds paired with music will be stored in long-term musical memory and accessible for mental rehearsal and memorization. Schön et al. further add that ‘the consistent mapping of musical and linguistic structure may optimize the operation of learning mechanisms’ (Schön et al. 2008:976). The idea that ‘music and language share some of the same neural connections and are therefore linked’ (Kutty et al. 2008:5) could explain why songs are becoming a popular and invaluable tool in the hands

of a teacher, ‘a tool in theoretical design and practical application of English-as-a-second-language instruction’ (Schunk 1999:111).

Lewis et al. point out that ‘a key to learning a foreign language is the amount of exposure you have to it’ (Lewis et al. 2005:7). Songs could prove to be an endless source of real-life material for pupils to use, preparing EFL learners for ‘the genuine English language they are to be faced with’ (Shen 2009:91) and as Baumann and Coleman further add, they could be, ‘real-life language resources which increase your opportunities to use the language’ (Baumann and Coleman 2005:141) and thus have motivational value. Research with college English classes has suggested that songs can enrich and activate a foreign language class, since lyrics can ‘serve as a direct genuine source of teaching materials in foreign language classes’ (Shen 2009:88). Adinolfi et al. add that ‘people who have learned a language through living in an environment in which it is spoken are often able to use the language fluently and spontaneously’ (Adinolfi et al. 2005:118). If songs can serve as an authentic and effective source of materials, this lends credence to Hamblin’s claim that ‘popular songs represent an invaluable treasure trove of genuine and interesting examples’ (Hamblin 1987:479) of language use. Different studies and projects have considered the benefits of the use of songs in the classroom, for example the Expressive Language and Music Project (ELM) whose aim was ‘to develop an integrated language and music program for preschool children in order to enhance their oral language competency in English’ (Gan and Chong 1998:39).

In line with Lozanov’s Suggestopedia (Bancroft 1975), a language teaching method, which ‘encourages the use of background music in order to stimulate learning of new structures and vocabulary in the L2’ (Eardley et al. 2005:27), Stansell maintains that ‘two aspects of language, pitch and phonemes are handled separately, yet in harmony by a musical-

linguistic collaboration’ (Stansell 2005:10). This ‘collaboration’ can be highly effective in terms of improving accent in the target language. It could be an exciting opportunity ‘to look at language in a new way – as a vehicle for taking voyages of pedagogical exploration in the classroom and beyond’ (Nunan 2001a:193).

The American Music therapy Association’s (AMTA) stated aim is to encourage the progressive development of the therapeutic use of music in rehabilitation, special education, and community settings. It is committed to the advancement of education, training, professional standards, credentials, and research in support of the music therapy profession. Research published by AMTA has provided evidence of the positive effects of music and songs on learning, which underpins the theory that ‘music influences the way people perceive things as well as the way they behave’ (Šišková 2008:12). This could make music a powerful tool for teaching grammar or vocabulary, and in the case of well-known pop songs, it could also prove popular with pupils. As Šišková argues: ‘their natural admiration for their favourite artists should motivate them to try to understand the lyrics of their songs’ (Šišková 2008:24) and help them to complete in a more effortless way the accompanying activities prepared by the teacher.

Richards’ view that songs offer ‘a pleasant way of giving repetition to words of a particular centre of interest or situation’ (Richards 1969:163) suggests that a song could be an opportunity to develop vocabulary. The repetitive nature of songs provides ‘wonderful opportunities to expand vocabulary and gain familiarity with colloquial expressions and certain grammatical structures’ (Milano 1994:1). If ‘songs and lullabies are important for the early development of vocal contagion, since these tunes seem to comfort the mother as well as the baby’ (Ostwald 1973:368), there is every reason to believe that songs could also help older children to develop their vocabulary and grammar acquisition. Bearing in mind

the nature of young children as energetic and playful, a teacher could take advantage of the natural enthusiasm created by the use of songs converting it into meaningful learning experiences, since ‘the rhythm, the repetition and most importantly the fun involved in rhymes get children naturally drawn to it’ (Ara 2009:165).

The power of songs has also been demonstrated in the area of disability, in that children suffering from autism have been found to ‘have an uncanny memory for songs, and hum or play different fragments of music from their records in a repetitive, stereotyped fashion (Ostwald 1973:370). The relationship between song and memory is also, according to Maclean observable among people suffering from mental illnesses, for example senile dementia, which deplete the capacity for long term-memory. *Singing for the brain* is a kind of choir specially designed for people suffering with dementia in the United States, helping them to deal with their memory problems. They show an increased capacity for remembering either persons or events from a distant period when they hear a song related to them since ‘even people in the late stages of dementia can dredge up tunes that it seemed they had forgotten years ago’ (Maclean 2012:15). As Newham maintains: ‘Songs provoke the sentiment of reminiscence and in consequence provoke thoughtful cerebral reflection upon the subject which is being reminisced’ (Newham 1995:8).

This view is reflected by Legg who postulates that ‘by associating a “catchy” melody with the vocabulary, the latter would be made more memorable’ (Legg 2009:3), and there is no reason why this should not apply equally well to grammar. What could give a song the characteristic of being “catchy” could be the fact that it includes patterns and repetition that are easy to remember and reproduce. They can therefore function as a vehicle for helping pupils learn English in a more effortless and enjoyable way through easy assimilation and memorisation of words and grammatical forms. It is reasonable to suggest then that if

songs are selected in accordance with the objectives of the lesson, containing vocabulary and grammatical structures identical to those being taught in the class, they should prove to be a valuable supplement to teaching materials. At the same time, it is important to keep in mind that songs should be tailored to the learning needs of each different age group and should also take account of differences within the groups. Variety is therefore needed, and pupils' own suggestions on the selection of songs can also be valuable if we are to keep them engaged in the learning process and maintain an effective learning atmosphere.

Many researchers have focused on the benefits the use of songs could have on children's overall academic achievement. Legg, as mentioned earlier, set out to test whether songs could help teenagers to improve learning words or phrases and whether they could improve their ability to memorize new vocabulary in French. He concluded that music 'can help to accelerate pupils' language learning' (Legg 2009:1). However, researchers like Lake (2002) studying high school pupils, Newham (1996) studying a broad range of people classified as 'handicapped' and Adkins (1997) studying middle school pupils mainly aged 12, have focused on the potential music has to bring positive change in classroom.

The power of songs to affect memory

Music and rhythm have been defined as powerful aids to language learning, memory, and recall. (Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:101) 'Interestingly, infants are remarkably adept at representing their auditory experiences in long-term memory' (McMullen and Saffran 2004:300). According to O'Donnell, the power of music to affect memory is intriguing since the information being studied activates the left brain while the music activates the right brain and 'the simultaneous left and right brain action maximises learning and retention of information' (O'Donnell 1999:2). This can cause 'the brain to be more capable of processing information' (O'Donnell 1999:2), in line with Kutty et al. who state that

‘using music as a strategy for teaching positively promotes memory and higher performance’ (Kutty et al. 2008:20).

Furthermore, keeping in mind that ‘memory plays a key role in learning vocabulary and a foreign language in general’ (Šišková 2008:29) and that, as Blodget believes, ‘there is no better way for storing information in long-term memory than through music’ (Blodget 2000) it would seem obvious that songs should have ‘a central place in the school curriculum’ (Dunbar 2010:41), and more specifically in the EFL curriculum. Since songs are a source of repetition, children can learn by repeating either new vocabulary or repeatedly using new grammar being learned, something that was stated by Lebo et al. (2008) in their study with elementary pupils who confirmed that ‘music directly impacts the performance of students increasing the memory’ (Lebo et al. 2008:11). Music and rhythm can benefit the rote memorization process and when various types of verbal information have been presented simultaneously with music, memorization can be enhanced and, as Šišková indicates, ‘the retentive effects of rhythm can be maximized when the targeted verbal information carries meaning’ (Šišková 2008:33).

We should not forget that ‘chanting the multiplication tables as a class was probably the fastest and best way of learning them’ (Dunbar 2010:42). So if children ‘have a strong sense of rhythm which can be explored to increase their awareness of rhyming patterns and alliteration in the English language’ (Gan and Chong 1998:41), it may well be that rhythmic melodies can help pupils to learn new vocabulary or new grammar given that ‘words and tunes are so deeply entrenched in memory’ (Dunbar 2010:42). Singing as opposed to listening to songs also seems to help pupils remember since according to O’Donnell ‘the body becomes relaxed and alert, the mind is able to concentrate more

easily' (O'Donnell 1999:2). Teachers, however, have to take advantage of the merits of individual songs in terms of language learning and make careful selections.

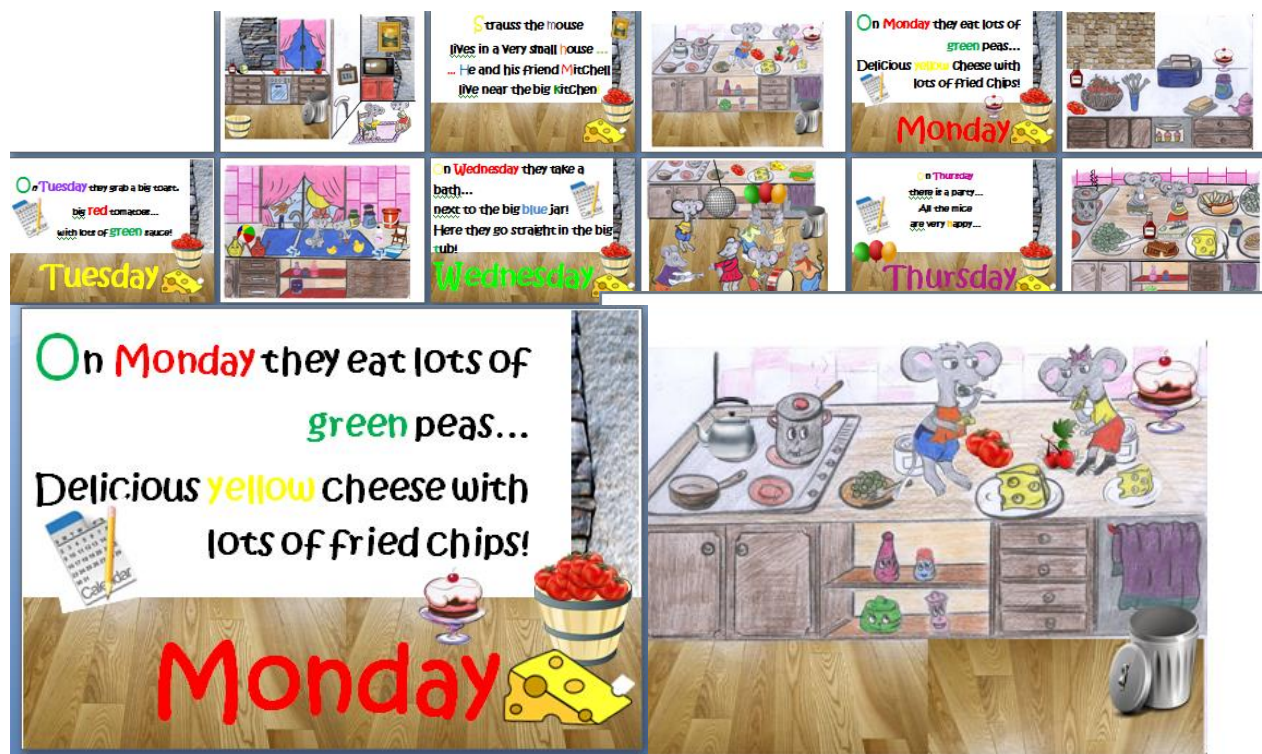
The implications of songs for classroom pedagogy

The pedagogical potential of music in foreign languages is, as we have explored, enormous, and this is underlined by Shen who speaks of the intrinsic merits songs and music possess, and even therapeutic functions, which render them an invaluable source for language learning. Adding to existing evidence on the important role music can play in the classroom, is a 1997 Gallup Survey on Americans' attitudes towards music, according to which 93% of the Americans believed that music was a part of a well-rounded education (California music project, Vol.2, Issue1, 2008). Even if some songs are syntactically and lexically complex, if they are analysed in the same way as any other literary sample, their importance in language learning could become more evident.

Many researchers have investigated the link between songs and language learning (Šišková 2008:16; Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011; Legg 2009:2), and the ways in which they can be used, for example for practising pronunciation and listening. Using songs in a language teaching classroom can provide a harmonious classroom atmosphere and can be a stimulus for student engagement in the language process, connecting entertainment with learning. In the same way, songs as supplementary activities can 'make an important contribution to challenging students' (Ho 2009:29). Using their imagination and creativity throughout this research study my pupils were given the chance to create their own songs or story-songs (Strauss the mouse), following either known rhythms or creating new ones; then selecting a particular language feature and incorporating it into their song in order to practise either new grammar or vocabulary. These advantages are evidence of their importance as

potentially rich learning materials which have the additional advantage of being ready-made, and also fun and easy to use in the language classroom.

Figure 2.1 Sample of the pages of the song-story created by the fifth-grade pupils “Strauss the mouse”



In terms of song types, according to my experience, all kind of songs, from nursery rhymes to pop songs can be used in the classroom and ‘may have not only an emotional function, but can also facilitate linguistic processing due to their simple and repetitive structure’ (Schön et al. 2008:982). Allowing students to choose songs they like can make them feel more responsible and also involve them more in the learning process. Pupils from around the ages of eight to nine usually like listening to pop music, which can be a good vehicle for trying out a wide variety of working arrangements, particularly group and pair work. This is because it is more natural and authentic for young learners to talk to each other about pop music, given their existing interest in the subject. So, bearing in mind that there needs to be differentiation in the teaching process in order to address the diversity of

learners' needs, it appears that songs can play an important role in giving students the opportunity to learn at their own pace, which in itself is likely to keep them motivated and help them accomplish their learning objectives.

In terms of linked activities, Vogely maintains that 'although visual stimulus is not an inherent part of LC activities, it can be a beneficial addition to any listening task, especially to beginning language learners' (Vogely 1999:117). Visual stimuli can accompany any listening tasks, in the form of videos, pictures or actual objects, helping 'learners relate personally to the topic, thus reducing the anxiety that can occur' (Vogely 1999:118) and creating a more learner-centred and low-anxiety classroom learning environment. As a result, the effectiveness of songs as teaching aids can be further enhanced if presented 'along with attention-catching, colourful visual aids to strengthen their value' (Jolly 1975:13). Interesting and emotionally engaging melodies that are easy to remember can be used to teach in a quasi-playground way which can encourage pupils to relax and display 'genuine interest and concentration' (Horwitz et al. 1986:300). Authors of different studies have claimed that music can also activate neurons 'leading to short-term improvements in visuospatial task performance' (Clarke et al. 2010:93), which can become a mnemonic device with the potential to influence memory during language learning. As Campbell (1997) suggests 'Sound and music can enhance the workplace as well as the classroom' (Campbell 1997:196). And this was evident in my research study, since even pupils who could not sing, improved their motivation and self-esteem, and felt more confident that they would complete the assignments which were accompanying the songs, and making their learning stimulating and enjoyable.

Reflecting culture through songs

Even though songs for young children have been widely used and have provided entertainment and enjoyment, there are songs and rhymes which are more culture-bound and ‘do not make sense to children from certain cultures, and while children may be able to recite the rhymes by rote, they hold no meaning or relevance for them’ (Choo 1998:47). As a result, it is, important to choose rhymes, poetry or songs that reflect local culture and experiences which children can relate to, in order to draw ‘students into culturally significant learning situations where they advance on a personal level while learning from other students’ creativity’ (Kutty et al. 2008:7).

Bright adds that ‘every culture in the world presumably has language, and every culture also has music’ (Bright 1963:26). Since English songs are part of English-speaking culture, they should be part of the English language lesson in order to give pupils ‘the chance to experience the cultural background of English’ (Richards 1969:167) and furthermore ‘enhance students’ awareness of another culture’ (Failoni 1993:97).

Concerns and negative effects of the use of songs

Although there are many benefits from the use of songs in language learning which render them a valuable teaching tool, there are some researchers who express concerns about using them in the language classroom. According to Millington, ‘a teacher needs to take care in selecting a suitable song for his or her class’ (Millington 2011:136), and, as Richards agrees, ‘the language, vocabulary, and sentence structure of some songs can be quite different from that used in spoken English’ (Richards, 1969:163), and this can make them unsuitable for use in language teaching classrooms. As a result, a teacher should

consider the purpose of any individual song in order to ensure that it does not interfere with language learning, and check whether ‘they establish irregular sentence or stress patterns which have to be corrected when used in conversation’ (Richards 1969:161). Moreover, it is not easy for all non-native English speaking EFL teachers to teach the stress and timing of songs correctly, with the result that they are ‘therefore probably more likely to only use certain songs that they feel comfortable with’ (Millington 2011:137), which might not be the most appropriate for the given group of pupils.

Given that the word music has its roots in the Greek word *muse*, and muses were born from Zeus and Mnemosyne, the Goddess of Memory, we could say that ‘music is a child of divine love whose grace, beauty, and mysterious healing powers are intimately connected to heavenly order and the memory of our origin and destiny’ (Campbell 1997: 30).

Consequently, as Campbell suggests, even ‘playing light, easily paced music in the background helps some people to concentrate for longer periods’ (Campbell 1997:74). It should not be forgotten, however, that others may be distracted by the use of songs, as mentioned by Šišková who asserts that music can sometimes serve ‘as a distraction and not as a means of learning the subject’ (Šišková 2008:13). Some pupils are easily excited and make unwanted noise and disturbance, creating a distraction for other pupils in class who find it difficult to concentrate. The use of technical equipment, as suggested by Murphey (1992b:8) can alleviate this problem, since if each pupil has his or her own headset, as mentioned later in this study, this can minimise unwanted noise as well as aiding concentration.

Other researchers have very wisely also given reasons for taking great care while using songs during the learning process. Richards maintains that ‘before using a song in the classroom it is important to make sure that the words and sentence patterns in it have been

already taught' (Richards 1969:167), since, as Richards also claims, there could be problems caused by difficult language which usually has 'low frequency, sometimes archaic and dialect words, and sentences of irregular structures and stressing' (Richards 1969:163). Consequently, a teacher considering using songs should consider carefully the vocabulary, pronunciation and grammatical input before using a song in the EFL classroom.

In addition, there are other difficulties facing the teacher in selecting and using songs. Since she or he needs to 'maintain variety in the classroom, the teacher needs a good repertoire of songs' (Millington 2011:137). Children do not like using the same song on several occasions and become easily bored. Moreover, according to Murphey, 'students disagree about songs, and have different musical tastes' (Murphey 1992b:8). A teacher should also have a good repertoire of interesting and engaging activities, taking into account that 'songs go out of date very quickly' (Murphey 1992b:8), and no matter how enjoyable or memorable songs are, they 'will not teach anyone to use the language, and will not give students the ability to communicate in another language' (Millington 2011:137). Unfortunately, a teacher may have to rely on personal collections of songs and activities, especially for children of 9-12 who do not show any interest in younger children's songs and nursery rhymes. It is disappointing, as Hamblin remarks, that ready-made materials, like activities linked to songs, are scarce, and 'educators must take primary responsibility for their creations and their effectiveness' (Hamblin 1987:482).

Amusia, also referred to as tone-deafness, 'a difficulty in discriminating pitch changes in melodies that affects around 4% of the human population' (Douglas and Bilkey 2007:915) is also something a teacher must have in mind while using songs since, as Clarke et al. mention, amusics are unable to recognise familiar melodies and 'cannot detect differences

between melodies, lacking the capacity that is otherwise widespread in the population to hear “wrong” notes’ (Clarke et al. 2010:134). Patel further adds that there are also pupils with normal hearing who may show ‘impaired perception of harmonic relations in music, either following brain damage (acquired amusia) or due to a lifelong condition (congenital amusia)’ (Patel 2003:675). These aspects present additional challenges.

Reflections and conclusions

This literature review has demonstrated that, despite a considerable body of research on motivation through the use of songs in EFL learning, there has been little work conducted on the impact this could have on learning outcomes, particularly with respect to grammar and vocabulary acquisition and especially in the Cypriot Primary Education context. Although there is a growing body of research on the power of songs to create positive emotions in pupils, there is gap with regard to whether songs could influence language success, and more specifically, through creating a positive attitude towards language learning, provide an easier and equally or more effective way to learn both grammar and vocabulary in the primary EFL context.

Focussing on the emotional domain and its links with learning, Lake contends that ‘emotions and language are one in a song and when coupled with visual images, music becomes a very powerful learning tool’ (Lake 2002:6). Songs could, therefore, as suggested earlier, provide a welcome change from the routine of classroom activity in learning a language, since as Batista also asserts ‘one chief reason for using music and song in the classroom is the variety they can bring to the lesson, thus providing a break in the classroom routine and enhancing students’ engagement and interest in it’ (Batista 2008:157). Songs can add variety into the classroom through the use of creative activities to replace current curriculum material and teaching styles that appear boring or not fully

engaging. They can also relate to learners' strengths and are 'likely to be appraised positively because they will be more comfortable and thus more pleasant. Moreover, as they will be within the learner's coping ability, they will certainly be more compatible with his or her self-concept' (Arnold and Fonseca 2004:122).

As emphasised by Devereux (Devereux, 1969 cited in Fonseca-Mora et al. 2011:106), 'reduction of anxiety and boredom related to work routines are also direct results of music enjoyment'. Adkins (1997) stresses the neurological aspects of music in terms of relaxation: 'Music has an uncanny manner of activating neurons for purposes of relaxing muscle tension, changing pulse, and producing long-range memories which are directly related to the number of neurons activated in the experience' (Adkins 1997:5). The emotional significance of song reflects Krashen's (1985) *Affective Filter Hypothesis*, which argues that teachers can create a positive attitude towards learning, if they can succeed in lowering the *affective filter*, i.e. motivate the learner and put him or her at ease in order to build self-confidence.

Given the power of music to arouse positive emotions, the use of songs, as argued by researchers in the field, can create a positive attitude towards learning, lowering the affective filter, and as a result creating optimum conditions for language learning. Negative feelings experienced by pupils can stunt progress and pupils 'are not likely to exhibit positive attitudes towards language class' (Philips 1992:22). The use of songs can create a stimulating and interesting learning environment, helping pupils maintain their motivation and 'thereby helping learners to reach higher levels of achievement' (Millington 2011:136). The relaxed atmosphere created and the non-threatening environment can increase interest to learn the target language since pupils 'often think of songs as entertainment rather than study and therefore find learning English through songs fun and

enjoyable' (Millington 2011:136). Since songs have the benefit of being fun, and can reduce children's anxiety, they can create an atmosphere for effective language learning and 'an attitude in our learners that reflects genuine interest and motivation to learn the language' (Young 1991:434). Through this study I aimed to find out whether these claims for the use of songs were reflected in my primary school context.

Through this literature review it became apparent that children today need something more than traditional teaching methods. They need to be in a learning situation which does not make them feel uncomfortable or under pressure. In my study, I attempted to find out whether songs could indeed be 'a source of motivation, interest and enjoyment' (Ara 2009:170) and, furthermore, whether a 'favourable environment, useful resources, carefully structured input and practice opportunities, a positive learning atmosphere' (Ara 2009:169) could lead to more effective grammar and vocabulary learning. The literature review has also shown it is important to keep in mind that the use of songs will not be unproblematic, and that we should be aware of the fact that 'we do not need great expertise in music to effectively teach with it' (Weinberger 1998:38) but do need to be careful with our choice of songs since they have to be suitable for the age-group concerned and their English language competence level. Regardless of the enjoyment songs could bring to a classroom, in order for them to be effective as EFL teaching material, the teacher must consider whether they have difficult or unsuitable words and adapt according to the pupils' needs and interests. This can take considerable time and effort.

Finally, De Andres underlines the importance of affect by reminding us that 'all flowers of tomorrow are in the seeds of today' (De Andres 1999:87), which could be interpreted as meaning that if we want to follow an affective teaching strategy leading to effective learning we have to pay great attention to affect. For this reason, I have attempted to

establish whether indeed songs can be an effective teaching tool resulting in the '*blossoming*' of English language learning, and can generate interested students who will achieve higher levels of grammatical competence and vocabulary acquisition through stimulating and charging 'the creative and motivational regions of the brain' (Campbell 1997:27).

PART II

Conceptual Framework

CHAPTER 3 - Methodological Considerations

Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology adopted for this study. I outline the research methods used, reflecting on the relevance of quantitative and qualitative methods, and particularly on questionnaires and their design for quantitative research; and on focus groups and observations as qualitative research methods. Quantitative research was used to measure the feelings and thoughts of pupils. Qualitative research was used to gain an in-depth insight into matters that affected pupils' behaviour, in particular the ways in which pupils reacted to the use of songs in the classroom.

I chose an action research approach following Cohen (2000) so that I could 'observe effects in real contexts, recognizing that context is a powerful determinant of both causes and effects' (Cohen 2000:225). I focused on the behaviours or attributes of 9-12 year old pupils', in particular on their development and performance, all of which have 'always been a very important component of applied linguistics research' (Duff 2008:35). This allowed me as a teacher-researcher to work with 'data and evidence collected deliberately and self-reflexively by watching and questioning what was happening' (Burns 2009:113), with a view to making future changes where appropriate

In order to take advantage of the merits of action research, my aim was to systematically collect data and analyse my findings in line with the research questions in order to improve my practice. I examined 'issues and questions related to immediate practice' (Burns 2009:114), exploring and discovering more about a specific issue which has significance not only for me but for the majority of teachers of EFL in Cyprus: keeping pupils motivated in order to improve language learning and helping them to learn new grammar

and vocabulary. My main aim was to find out more about what was going on in my own school and, through self-reflective enquiry, gain ‘a better understanding of the educational environment’ and develop ideas for ‘improving the effectiveness of teaching’ (Dörnyei 2007:191). My ultimate goal was to be able to share my findings with other EFL primary teachers facing similar issues in their classrooms, ‘in order to change or improve their current practice’ (Heigham and Croker 2009:14).

Sandelowsky tells us that many researchers ‘have increasingly turned to mixed-method techniques to expand the scope and improve the analytic power of their studies’ (Sandelowsky 2000:246). Incorporating techniques from both quantitative and qualitative research traditions gave me deeper insights into my chosen topics, allowing me to build up a comprehensive picture. Quantitative methods enabled statistical inferences to be made involving probability sampling, and qualitative methods produced data that complemented and extended the statistical information.

I decided to use a variety of data-collection techniques since ‘there is a distinct tradition in the literature on social science research methods that advocates the use of multiple methods’ (Jick 1979:602). In this way I would be able to compare findings and determine whether, in the words of Burns ‘analysis and findings are well supported across different sources of information’ (Burns 2009:127). It was hoped that by using multiple and independent measures, I would improve the validity of my data, which is generally the case ‘when two or more distinct methods are found to be congruent and yield comparable data’ (Jick 1979:602). My aim was to capture a more complete, holistic and contextual picture of the pupils under investigation.

Research Design and Theoretical Framework

I selected methodological paradigms in line with my research questions, and adopted a mixed-method approach which would, through combining complementary research methods, contribute data intended to lead to a better understanding of the phenomenon in question. Guided by my research questions, all the methods I selected were intended to work together to yield a rich description of the learner's experience and enable me to gain multiple perspectives on aspects of the phenomenon being researched. This mixed method study employed three small samples covering three different age groups - 9-10, 10-11 and 11-12 (Table 3.1) - and investigated language learning in one specific setting, the school they were attending and where I was working. This helped me to have a more friendly relationship with pupils so that they might find it easier to express their feelings and thoughts, which would enable me 'to be more sensitive to what is acceptable or unacceptable when carrying out investigations in a particular organisational context' (Plowright 2011:10).

My sample consisted of three classes (D1, D2, D3) of 9-10 year-olds, two classes (E1, E2) of pupils aged 10-11 and three classes (St1, St2, St3) of 11-12 year-olds which were the highest age group at the specific school at that time. Table 3.1 shows the exact number of pupils in each school grade, with 171 pupils in total, although sometimes the total in questionnaire answers varied due to missing or irrelevant answers. These were calculated as missing values during the statistical analysis. Participants were from both sexes, and from all social classes, which included all economic and educational backgrounds. They were scheduled for observation two or three times a week (Table 3.2) which did not interfere with the usual scheduled English classes. I followed Schofield and Francis (1982) who carried out observations on more than one occasion and at different times each week:

‘so that any cycles in the children’s behaviour throughout each week or day would not systematically bias the data’ (Schofield and Francis 1982:726).

Table 3.1 Distribution of Classes - Three different age groups

	Number of learners	Percent
Fourth Grade, (Class D1/Class D2/Class D3) (9-10 years old)	59	34.5
Fifth Grade, (Class E1/ Class E2) (10-11 years old)	44	25.7
Sixth Grade, (Class St1/Class St2/Class St3) (11-12 years old)	68	39.8
Total (Exact number of sample)	171	100.0

Each class followed the regular school schedule of twice-weekly 45-minute English lessons. Lesson observations were scheduled as shown in Table 3.2 below. Pupils were observed and video-taped during one lesson in which songs were not used and one which included the use of songs. They were also observed while doing different activities linked to songs, during which I took notes in my personal diary. A pre-questionnaire (Appendix D) was given out to each class at the start of the study before the first lesson in which songs were not included, and a post-questionnaire (Appendix D) was given out after the lesson which included the use of songs. Both questionnaires were translated into Greek (Appendix D & E) in order for pupils to be able to answer all the questions as accurately as possible without the need to interrupt them to explain words and answer questions and in this way risk influencing their answers.

Table 3.2 Lesson Schedules

<i>Class</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Lesson</i>
D'1/D'2/ D'3	19 th January 2011	<i>Unit 9 (Dracula's Castle)</i> Function: <i>Expressing possession</i> <i>Expressing family relationships</i> <i>Plurals/numbers(1-100)</i> Structure: <i>Whose is this/that/it?</i> <i>It's X's ...</i> Not using songs
	2 nd February 2011	<i>Unit 12 (Pirates)</i> Function: <i>Identifying Colours</i> Structure: <i>Adjectives of colour + noun</i> using songs
E'1/ E'2	18 th January 2011	<i>Unit 9 (Tony has got toothache)</i> Function: <i>Talking about likes and dislikes</i> Structure: <i>He/She likes / doesn't like ...</i> Not using songs
	25 th January 2011	<i>Unit 12 (The busy witch)</i> Function: <i>Describing habitual activities/Telling the time (all possibilities)</i> Structure: <i>Present Simple with at + time</i> Using songs
St'1/ St'2 / St'3	20 th January 2011	<i>Unit 10 (A trip to Troodos)</i> Function : <i>Talking about past activities (Simple Past Tense)</i> Structures: <i>Past tense of various verbs</i> Not using songs
	3 rd February 2011	<i>Unit' Give number (Races are dangerous)</i> Function : <i>Comparatives</i> Structures: <i>Comparing items and people</i> Using songs

Methodological paradigms that have shaped this educational research

Positivism

Although I had been influenced by the positivist paradigm, I had to abandon the idea of experimental and control groups, because of ethical objections which I discuss in a later section. Despite the initial setback regarding control groups I chose to combine positivist and interpretive approaches, following Lin's view that qualitative work can be positivist since it can 'document practices that lead consistently to one set of outcomes rather than another to identify characteristics that commonly are related to some policy problem' (Lin 1998:162). At the same time, it can be interpretivist in that it can lead to an understanding of general concepts 'in their specific operation, to uncover the conscious and unconscious explanations people have for what they do or believe' (Lin 1998:162). A positivist questionnaire informed by the rest of my ethnographic research work was intended to combine both positivist and interpretivist approaches providing 'both the causal 'what' and the causal 'how' - something neither approach can provide alone' (Lin 1998:168).

Interpretivism

In order to investigate and interpret students' perceptions and attitudes and how these were shaped, I also adopted an interpretive approach, as explained above, according to which 'there are no absolutes, but all phenomena can be studied and interpreted in different ways, mainly because people and situations differ' (Burgess et al. 2006:55). Furthermore, interpretivism encourages a shift towards qualitative methods starting from the position that 'our knowledge of reality, including the domain of human action, is a social construction by human actors' (Walsham 2006: 320). In order to study a specific kind of

human action, in a specific primary school setting, I employed an ethnographic strategy which gave me an ideal opportunity to study pupils' progress through musical intervention in the language learning process. It also allowed me to interpret learner behaviour in local settings and establish from the results whether songs could be used successfully as a teaching tool. As with most ethnographic studies, I was concerned with group rather than individual characteristics in line with Sandberg's contention that 'cultural behaviour is by definition shared behaviour' (Sandberg 2000:577).

Constructivism

No social circumstances can be taken for granted, since they can be altered in order to bring about change. Individuals or groups participate in creating their own social reality which is an ongoing, dynamic process. In terms of learning, this can make a difference to the whole learning process. Participants, in this case pupils aged 9-12, constructed their own social reality through their own knowledge. The constructivist paradigm in research stresses the importance of individuals building their own knowledge, reflecting Sandberg's assertion that 'truth or knowledge is relative and subject to each individual's experiences within his or her own context' (Sandberg 2000:13). Learning is a constructive activity that students themselves have to carry out individually, by building on knowledge in relation to the knowledge which they already have acquired. If they have not managed to learn what they should have learned in a specific classroom, they will face a problem when they move up to the next level as they will not be able to build on prior knowledge.

Bearing in mind that students' and teachers' interactions with one another construct and reconstruct the social world of the classroom, I was able to study these interactions as they shaped the whole learning and teaching process from my standpoint as researcher and teacher at the same time, and more specifically examine how students and teachers reacted

to the use of songs. For example, did it bring about any change in students' motivation? Did it make a difference to the ways in which they learned grammar or vocabulary?

The use of ethnography in the EFL classroom

Ethnography is the study of people's behaviour in naturally occurring ongoing settings. It is a process of studying human life, in this case the classroom, and focuses on interpretation of pupils' behaviour in class and on constructing descriptions of the 'complex interrelationships of causes and consequences that affect human behaviour' (Le Compte et al. 1993:3). Following an ethnographic approach helped me to analyse if and in what way the emotions experienced while working with songs influenced the development of grammar and vocabulary skills since ethnography was giving me the advantage to 'gain a more holistic perspective on teacher- student interactions to aid teacher training and improve practice' (Watson-Gegeo1988:575). I thus had the advantage of 'a situated view of learners, language learning and the emotional experiences associated with language learning in a particular instructional setting over time' (Bown and White 2010:440).

Before this study, pupils worked only with the material provided in their textbook which they found quite boring. A closer examination of the second and third research questions relating to grammar and vocabulary acquisition made me realise that it was not only the kind of songs that were about to be used that was important, but also the kind of activities that would be used in combination with the songs. Ethnography would give me a more holistic perspective on student-teacher interactions and improve my own teaching performance through an interpretive-exploratory account of how students emotionally reacted in the classroom while listening to songs and completing different song activities,

documenting in this way the ‘teaching-learning interactions in rich, contextualized detail’ (Watson-Gegeo 1988:585).

As Fraenkel and Wallen state: ‘Ethnographic research can lend itself well to a detailed study of individuals as well as classrooms’ (2001:482) thus, concentrating on carefully describing interactions and events, I worked within an ethnographic framework, which gave me the chance to systematically document teaching-learning interaction among groups of pupils of three different age groups while using songs during the learning process in a State primary school. I attempted to develop a theory concerning the use of songs in the EFL classroom and how pupils react to them. Studying second language learning ethnographically offered me the opportunity to document and analyze in a specific school setting what is required to establish an effective and motivating method of teaching EFL. I intended the findings of my study to be available for other teachers to utilise in their own classrooms. In this way I hoped to justify the generalizability of the findings in that they could apply ‘to a situation beyond the research setting’ (Deville, 2006:3).

This ‘broader cultural orientation of ethnography that distinguishes it from the narrower concerns of case study’ (Hood 2009:71) was the reason I decided to adopt ethnography in my main study as opposed to case study, since, in line with Duff (2008), ‘whereas case study focuses on the behaviours or attributes of individual learners or other individuals/entities, [ethnography] aims to understand and interpret the behaviours, values, and structures of collectivities or social groups with particular reference to the cultural basis for these behaviours or values’ (Duff 2008:34, cited in Hood 2009:71). As Dörnyei suggests, ‘cultures is not limited to ethnic groups but can be related to any “bounded units” such as organizations, programmes, and even distinct communities’ (Dörnyei 2007:130). In order to provide a descriptive and interpretive explanation of my pupils’ behaviour in

the language learning classroom, I carried out systematic, intensive, detailed observation of their behaviour, focussing on individuals, while taking into account that all pupils should be bracketed in 'the interactions and the context around them' (Walters 2007:96). I sought to interpret 'the meanings of behaviour, language and interactions of the culture sharing group' (Crosswell, 1998:58 cited in Walters 2007:91). Through studying pupils' reactions to the use of songs, I investigated 'a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context' (Yin, 2003:13 cited in Walters 2007:92). In my initial study, I took steps to understand the specific classroom situation within the acknowledged social system, and the problems of implementing songs in the EFL classroom. This enabled me in the main study to deal in advance with specific problems, for example, the need for headsets in order to minimize noise.

As an ethnographic study, my investigation belongs to the kind of research that has become, 'if not the dominant, then certainly one of the most frequently adopted approaches to educational research in recent years' (Morrison and Pole 2003:1). My primary objective was to collect data that would convey the subjective reality of using songs in the classroom. I investigated my pupils' interactions in ordinary settings during the regular day and time of their English lesson twice a week, looking for patterns of daily living, what pupils did, said and used in their learning. This helped me to come to conclusions about the use of songs in this specific setting, the EFL classroom in a Cypriot Primary School. I wanted to learn enough about my pupils to be able 'to create a cultural portrait of how the people belonging to that culture live, work, and/or play together' (Heigham and Sakui 2009:92). It was important to make careful decisions about which methods and instruments would be most appropriate for gathering data that would address my research questions. To this end, this combination of different methods allowed me to 'provide rich descriptions of the participants' standpoints – as honestly and fully as possible' (Rallis and Rossman

2009:265), offering the reader a clear picture of my interpretations and conclusions through this journey of my study, and at the same time making sure that everything was carefully and thoughtfully done.

I used different kinds of data collection techniques with the aim of establishing ‘the accuracy of conclusions drawn by triangulating with several sources of data’ (Le Compte 1993:48), and thereby increasing the reliability and validity of my findings. According to Charmaz (2006), ethnographic study implies the inclusion of supplementary data from ‘occasionally, formal interviews and questionnaires’ (Charmaz 2006:21) which is in line with a mixed-method approach. Quantitative data could be analysed statistically in a linear manner. By contrast, qualitative data was nonlinear, making it necessary for me to move back and forth through my data until new information had nothing further to add to the understanding of the specific topic, since as Croker states ‘data analysis will often steer data collection, as ongoing analysis indicates what avenues of research to pursue – who to observe or interview next, what questions to ask, and what documents to request’ (Croker 2009:10).

In my initial study, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to collect evidence. Using forms of qualitative research and more specifically lesson observations, I focused on natural settings paying particular attention to all aspects of the teaching and learning process. I was concerned with processes, activities and actions as they occurred in the classroom, but because of the need for further triangulating data from different research tools and in order to ‘provide stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses’ (Eisenhardt 1989:538), I decided to include in the main study more research instruments like pupils’ diaries, open-ended questionnaires and focus groups, which would help in further eliminating any bias and would substantiate more my research findings.

Action Research

Action research was particularly relevant to my study as it allowed me to focus on a narrow field within my own teaching practice in order to refresh my own teaching, and, in addition, extend myself professionally in a ‘spiral of cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting’ (Kemmis 1988:168). Putting into practice the methods and procedures adopted in this study, I was able to record ‘the information systematically, reflecting on it and analysing what it is revealing, so that any further actions you plan are based on current evidence’ (Burns 2009:115). Investigating and reflecting on my own practice, I attempted to uncover what students believed about motivation in the EFL lesson and also about the teaching/learning of grammar and vocabulary, documenting Breen and Candlin’s viewpoint that ‘as a participant-observer, the teacher has the opportunity to ‘step back’ and monitor the communicative process of learning-teaching’ (Breen and Candlin 2001:18). Through action research which does not aim to ‘replace the practitioners’ thinking by expert knowledge but rather aims to build on it and to support it’ (Altrichter 1993:48), I hoped to find out more about what was going on in my ‘own local context in order to change or improve current practice in that situation’ (Burns 2009:115). Students’ contributions concerning their personal beliefs about this musical intervention were, I believe, very significant as they helped to triangulate the data, alerting me to potential analytical errors and omissions, which proved especially valuable.

I also drew on my experience and knowledge of using songs with EFL primary school pupils ‘in order to share [them] with fellow professionals’ (Altrichter 1993:51). In practical terms, seminars organized around this project gave me the opportunity to present my ideas and thoughts concerning the use of songs, and critically discuss them with other teachers. My knowledge in the field due to my involvement in this research study proved to be of

particular interest not only to primary education teachers but also to elementary and high school teachers who stated that they were mainly concerned about keeping their pupils motivated and interested in the learning process.

According to Bassey, 'the most promising means of improving teaching is by grounding educational research (and thus theory) in the realities of teachers' everyday experience' (Bassey 1995:146). Action research enabled me to deal with my own pupils' problems, address their concerns and make decisions that would lead to better learning outcomes. It also provided opportunities for me to reflect on the learning process, and examine and assess my own teaching and my pupils' reactions. As Elliott (1988) maintains, educational action research is 'insider' research, carried out to improve the practitioner's own practice. I was particularly interested in judgments and decisions that could improve educational practice.

Hargreaves (1997) points out, however, the need for evidence about 'what works', in particular evidence-based research relating to (1) what teachers do in the classroom, and (2) the outcomes and effectiveness of these activities. Such research can help to provide solutions to practical problems, such as useful strategies that pupils could use in order to promote more effective language learning. It could thus help teachers to decide whether if they 'change their practice from x to y there will be a significant and enduring improvement in teaching and learning' (Hargreaves 1996:9). It can also help teachers to find ways of developing a non-threatening classroom climate, which might help learners relax and increase the effectiveness of most of the learning activities.

Even though being a researcher and a teacher at the same time was not easy to accomplish since as Edwards (2002) states 'educational researchers are practitioners in an engaged

social science which makes particular demands on them' (Edwards 2002:157), an action research framework enabled me to assess more accurately what improvements were needed and how I could work differently in order to accomplish better learning results for my pupils. Although it is common in educational action research for 'outsiders' to be involved in providing most often 'material, organizational, emotional, and intellectual support to practitioners' (Kemmis 1988:176) and it would have been of great value to have had the help of someone else using the video camera during the lesson observations, I decided, not to have anyone else in the classroom during the lesson time, in order to avoid influencing my pupils' behaviour and reactions due to the intervention of an unknown outsider.

Using mixed methods

The use of mixed methods provided my research with a depth that a single approach would have lacked, giving 'useful insights into issues of special relevance to the use of songs in the EFL classroom' (Duff 2008:128), and allowing me 'to obtain as many perspectives as possible on the phenomenon being researched' (Croker 2009:17). This was crucial for achieving data triangulation. The mixed-method approach had many advantages, as outlined by Ivankova and Creswell: gaining an 'in-depth understanding of trends and patterns; generating and testing theories; developing new measurement instruments; studying diverse perspectives; or understanding the relationship between variables' (Ivankova and Creswell 2009:145). It also enabled me to identify the extent to which learners are motivated and enjoy songs as an integral part of the learning process. At the same time I needed to assess students' performance in grammar and vocabulary so that I could identify any relationships between (1) motivation and enjoyment, and (2) the

achievement of good learning results. Table 3.1 which follows presents methods which took place during this research study following the corresponding methodology.

Table 3.3 Methodology and Methods

<u>Initial Study</u>		
Case study		
<u>Main Study</u>		
Ethnography Mixed method approach Action Research		
Sequence	Quantitative methods	Qualitative methods
1.	Pre-Questionnaires	
2.		Lesson Observations
3.		Personal Journals and pupils diaries
4.	Post-Questionnaires	
5.	Open Questionnaires	
6.		Focus groups

Quantitative methods

In my main study, quantitative methods were used to determine through pre- and post-questionnaires whether any change occurred in students' motivation in the English language classroom. Using quantitative research, I attempted to gather numeric data through the use of questionnaires. I analysed the data using Microsoft Excel during the initial study, but since I was not able to obtain detailed statistical comparisons of the results through Microsoft Excel, I used SPSS for the main study. The quantitative data in the form of a post-questionnaire at the end of the research process was used to indicate whether songs did indeed help pupils learn new vocabulary and/or new grammatical structures. The

information gathered was then compared to the pre- questionnaire administered before songs were incorporated into the lessons.

Questionnaires

A detailed pre- and post- questionnaire (Appendices D and E) was given out to pupils before and after using songs as an integral part of classroom activities, in an attempt to correlate results across the two and allow me to assess any effects of songs on language learning. I constructed it in such a manner as to enable me to find out more closely students' attitudes towards the use of songs in their learning of English. The use of questionnaires is popular with many researchers investigating L2 motivation, in particular 'to assess the attitudinal / motivational disposition of L2 learners' (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2001:213). Designing a questionnaire and choosing questions that would be interpreted correctly and would provide the required information, was indeed a considerable challenge, 'especially if one is seeking subjective data' (Graves 2001:180). Through the use of questionnaires I tried to describe the characteristics, attitudes and opinions of pupils.

The results from questionnaires in my initial study prompted amendments to the pre-questionnaire in order to ensure that the questions were clear and had the potential to generate answers that could be easily analysed. Moreover, it required me to deal with 'acquiescence, which refers to the tendency to agree with sentences when they are unsure or ambivalent' (Dörnyei 2003:13) and the halo effect which 'concerns the human tendency to over-generalize' (Dörnyei 2003:13). In order to obtain clear answers in my main study, I needed to be as straightforward and unambiguous as possible, using simple and natural language, and keeping answers short and direct, so that pupils would not misunderstand or forget something important. Finally I needed to create a questionnaire that even the slowest reader in class would be able to finish on time. My final questionnaire consisted of mainly

‘closed-ended’ questions which were simple to answer as can be seen in Appendix D and Appendix E. The ‘Likert Scale’ was adopted with pupils being asked to indicate the extent of their agreement or disagreement by selecting one of five responses ranging from ‘agree’ and ‘strongly agree’ to ‘disagree’ and ‘strongly disagree’. This resulted in a wide range of possible scores that helped to increase the number of statistical analyses that could be made. In designing the questions I followed a model which took into consideration how a respondent might interpret the question and all the possible responses a person might want to make, in order to help my pupils be more accurate with their answers.

Questionnaires allowed me to gather answers to my research questions in a systematic and disciplined manner. In order to ensure that participants understood all the questions, I translated the questionnaires into Greek (Appendix D and Appendix E - translation). This encouraged them to be focused, rather than distracted by words and phrases they did not fully understand. Through these questionnaires I was able to gather a large amount of information quickly in a form that was relatively straightforward to process. The questions covered attitudes, opinions, beliefs and interests, which helped me find out if the whole learning climate was positive and if this helped pupils learn grammar and vocabulary more easily and effectively, as I discuss later in Chapter 5 which deals with the Findings.

Broadly speaking, my questionnaires yielded three types of data: (1) Through the use of *factual questions*, I found out certain facts such as the number of years they had been learning English as a foreign language in the different age groups, and the extent of their previous language learning experience, (2) *behavioural questions* gave me information on students’ learning habits and actions and (3) *attitudinal questions* were designed to give me information on what they thought about the absence (pre-questionnaires) or the presence (post-questionnaires) of songs as an integral part of the learning process.

To allow pupils to give their opinion in a more detailed and less guided way and add a detailed description of pupils' thoughts, I included a small open-ended questionnaire (Appendix F) after the post-questionnaires and just before the focus groups, in order to allow pupils to express themselves more freely, and also to help me decide on the questions to be used during the focus groups. This questionnaire containing open-ended questions was administered to pupils a few days after they had completed the post-questionnaires and I had finished the lesson observations.

In order to work well, according to Dörnyei, an open-ended questionnaire should not be 'completely open but contain certain guidance' (Dörnyei 2007:107). I therefore provided pupils with a number of set responses to select from, which were particularly relevant to my research questions, and also included an additional category (other) that they could tick if the response they wished to give was not listed. In this way I attempted to adequately cover all the responses that respondents wished to give, allowing them the chance to further develop their own opinions and points of view. Open questions also helped me at a later stage to define the questions to be used in the focus groups (Appendix G), which aimed to shed light on pupils' overall reactions to the materials and the extent to which they liked or disliked using songs.

When preparing the open-ended questionnaire I needed to consider other factors that might have impacted either positively or negatively on the results of my study. For example, if prior musical knowledge / experience e.g. playing a musical instrument, pre-existing enjoyment of songs or encouragement from parents, might positively have affected my results, and if lack of musical ability, dislike of songs or absence of parental involvement might have influenced them negatively. The open-ended questions allowed for a response format that would give 'respondents the freedom to provide any answer which they care to

make'. (Burton 2006:339). To cope with a potentially wide range of responses I constructed themed categories which were coded in order to be able to allow for further statistical analysis of the data.

Since it was easier to analyse data consisting of numbers rather than a mixture of numbers and other characters such as alphabetic letters, all of the variables from answers in the pre- and post-questionnaires and open ended questionnaire were coded as numbers. So, for instance, each of the five possible answers to the first question were given a number from 1-5. It was 'also important', as Bryman and Cramer point out, 'to reserve a number for missing data, such as a failure to give a clear and unambiguous response, since we need to record this information' (Bryman and Cramer 1990:19).

Qualitative methods

Using different forms of qualitative research, I focused on natural settings and the whole learning and teaching process. As I was concerned with processes, activities and actions as they took place in classroom, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously and continuously, in order 'to identify categories, themes, and patterns that help explain the phenomenon under consideration and the contexts in which they occur' (Hood 2009:78). In this endeavour, like a miner digging for gold, I had to 'sort through large quantities of unsorted material' (Hahn 2008:5). My aim was to 'provide stronger substantiation of constructs and hypotheses' (Eisenhardt 1989:538) through triangulating data from different research tools.

As mentioned earlier (Table 3.1), this research involved the pupils in each of three classes studying English in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade. All pupils in these three classes completed the questionnaires and were observed as they participated in the songs and

activities. This sample was considered to be representative of the wider primary population since there were pupils of different learning abilities, including both very high and very low achievers. The follow-up focus groups, however, involved a selected sample based on the findings of the observation and questionnaire data. I chose as mentioned in the Methodology chapter to include one focus group discussion from each class each consisting of 5 to 6 pupils. Those pupils were chosen according to the observed videotaped lesson in order to have pupils being either positive or negative towards the use of songs creating a mixed group which would yield both positive and negative comments in order to get a more rounded picture of pupils' opinion. Unfortunately as also explained in the Methodology chapter pupils' diary did not work as expected and did not add that much to the rest of the data since either they were not willing to complete it or if they completed it they did not write sufficient comments which would add something new.

Observations

As a participant observer and in order to identify individual strengths and weaknesses, I was in direct contact with pupils and able to closely observe their reactions while using songs in class, allowing me to see and study pupils' behaviours and giving me 'important insights into the external aspects of language learning' (Cowie 2009:168). This placed me in a good position to reflect on the flow of the lesson and evaluate my own teaching. Since, as Silverman (1993) states, 'it is difficult to conduct observational studies on large samples' (Silverman 1993:9), I decided, as explained in Chapter 1, to observe the fourth, fifth and sixth grades (only these three grades were taught English) just in my own school in an attempt to gather data which would be as reliable as possible.

A video camera was used for recording the lessons, which provided my research with 'a more objective account of events and behaviours' (Dörnyei 2007:185) and gave me the

chance to study more carefully each lesson at a later stage without losing valuable information and detail. The use, however, of video recordings did present some problems. First there were ethical issues concerning the arrangement of a few pupils (two pupils in the fourth grade and three pupils in the sixth grade) who, although they consented to taking part in this research, did not consent to being videotaped. Second, using a fixed camera caused a minor problem in terms of capturing the entire class, because of having to make ‘instantaneous decisions about who or what was worthy of the camera’s ‘precious focus’ (Dörnyei 2007:184).

In order to deal with behavioural problems and assess the results of incorporating songs through observation data, I developed an instrument to measure the extent of motivation in the classroom and how positive pupils were towards learning new grammar or new vocabulary. This instrument, in the form of a ‘tally-based observation schedule’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:130), was used to show how many times pupils were engaged in each type of behaviour (Table 3.2). Through this event-recording instrument I made ‘frequency counts of particular acts’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:131) in an attempt to find out how many times a pupil engaged in six types of specific behaviour during the lessons being observed. I recorded the number of pupils who appeared not to be willing to participate in lessons, and those who were clearly engaged in the learning process, as evidenced by their enthusiasm and interest. Rating pupils’ attention and participation was intended to ensure that nothing was assumed or taken for granted and to help reduce subjectivity.

Table 3.4 A tally-based observation schedule used within my personal journal, to rate pupils' behaviour in recorded classes

Pupil's Name	Date:..... Lesson without songs	Date:..... Lesson with songs
Rating Scale	Number of times	Number of times
Bored/yawning		
Hesitation		
Bored/ absent-minded		
Facial expressions showing satisfaction		
Facial expressions showing enthusiasm		
Effort		
Persistence		
Attention		
Positive attitude		
Negative attitude		
Learning new grammar		
Learning new vocabulary		
Difficulties learning grammar		
Difficulties learning vocabulary		

Data from observation was used to obtain information about behaviour associated with motivation, since motivation itself is not observable. I was able to study levels of motivation through pupils' reactions which showed whether they were reacting favourably to using songs or not, and observe their 'interest in and enthusiasm for the materials used in class; persistence with the learning task, as indicated by levels of attention or action for an extended duration; and levels of concentration and enjoyment' (Crookes and Schmidt 1991: 498 cited in Peacock 1997:145). Notes were made about motivated behaviour in the

language classroom. The tally-based observational schedule used in combination with my personal journal which was designed specifically to focus on ‘the students’ motivated behaviours in language classes’ (Dörnyei 2007:242), gave me an advantage, in allowing me to have direct access to what my pupils did without having to rely on what they said they did (retrospective accounts). This provided ‘a more objective account of events and behaviours’ (Dörnyei 2007:178).

Following Atkinson and Coffey, pupils’ reactions were represented and studied primarily through ‘visual materials, or through an interplay between visual and textual representations’ (Atkinson and Coffey 1996:135), in this case videotaped lessons, and transcripts. Incorporating visual material and more specifically video stills of the pupils, according to Ball and Smith (1992 quoted in Atkinson and Coffey, 1996) ‘has been associated with ethnographic work, especially in anthropological monographs’ (Atkinson and Coffey 1996:135). Video stills would have helped me document pupils’ behaviour in combination with transcripts from videos which ‘reveal insights into processes that might otherwise be missed’ (Basil 2011:254). They might also have yielded useful information on naturally occurring events in the natural setting of a classroom. However, the idea of using video stills was finally rejected on ethical grounds, more specifically because of the impossibility of preserving the anonymity of participants. Nevertheless, the use of the tally-based schedule compensated for this since it allowed me to keep noting down pupils’ reactions and any positive or negative feelings either verbally expressed or through any physical and facial expressions.

Through these observations which were supported by the video recordings, I adopted a strategy of conscious noticing and detailed examination of participants’ behaviour in a naturalistic setting, noting down ‘the beliefs, values and behaviours of cohesive groups of

people' (Heigham and Sakui 2009:93). In order to examine what pupils did, how they behaved and what they said, I had to observe them carefully during the recorded language lessons. I studied closely their moves, their hesitations, their gestures and their reactions while using songs and talking with their peers. I recorded all these behaviours in precise detail as pupils worked with the songs, in order to evaluate how the use of songs influenced the whole learning process. This provided my research with 'rich descriptive data about the contexts, activities and beliefs of participants in educational settings' (Le Compte et al. 1993:8). Observations also provided a starting point for the focus groups, as well as a background for comparison with them. Studying the learners' overall reactions to the use of songs enabled the 'selection of students with negative as well as positive reactions for interview' (Murphy 2002:53).

Personal journal and pupils' diaries

Educational research suggests that researchers should keep journals in addition to their observations and as Dörnyei (2007) suggests 'it is a common recommendation in social research that the researcher should keep a journal' (Dörnyei 2007:160). In these journals they 'can take note of their impressions, questions, emerging themes, decision making or any other issues that arise' (Duff 2008:142). As mentioned earlier, from the notes in my personal journal made during observations, I drew up a checklist in the form of the tally-based observation schedule (Table 3.4) which was used to monitor emotions, motivation, successful learning, and was instrumental in helping me to create the open-ended questionnaire which emerged from the data and also the focus groups' questions.

Keeping a personal journal was an important part of the research process and proved to be a vital and invaluable habit, since it helped me to remember later what had happened and what was important during the lessons that were observed. Keeping a journal was primarily ‘a way of thinking about what you are doing, a means of tracking your own ideas as you learn, a way of giving direction, shape and purpose to your study’ (Creed et al. 2004:6). It was also a way of keeping track of my own ideas and creating a reflective record which I could then go back to and re-read, allowing my ideas to take off in new directions. As in the case of Morrison and Pole, my personal diary offered ‘a mine of information for the ethnographer allowing access to personal reflections unavailable via any other means’ (Morrison and Pole 2003:62).

In order to collect information from my pupils that was more descriptive or reflective in nature I gave out open-format diaries which allowed them ‘to express their own priorities and provide some evidence of the meaning and weight that individuals attach to different events or problems in their lives’ (Hawkes et al. 2009:211), and offered me ‘the opportunity for the recording of events and emotions in their social context’ (Hawkes et al. 2009:211). These diaries were first designed to be more structured ‘through the use of checklists or other fixed response formats’ (Hawkes et al. 2009:211). However, I then realised that they would be more reflective if I encouraged pupils to express themselves through noting down their thoughts, which would provide evidence of their feelings and the problems they were facing while using songs (Appendix I). The keeping of pupils’ diaries as mentioned above, was useful in the assessment of emotions, elucidating ‘in detail emotional experiences reported by students’ (Hascher 2008:89). The fact that students at the end of the lesson had to comment on their learning experience, by providing a short

self-report on their psychological state⁴, including the possible stress or the possible happiness they felt during the lesson, allowed me to reflect systematically on their experiences and provided opportunities for me to re-evaluate my beliefs and conceptions of classroom roles and relationships.

The information gathered from the completed pupils' diaries related mostly to their worries and feelings, reflecting what they felt to be important to record from their own perspective. Despite some problems which occurred in cases where not all the pupils were willing to complete their diary or, as they claimed, kept forgetting to complete it, these diaries and my own journal added usefully to the data in that they 'provided information and insights into language learning which is unlikely to be obtained by other means' (Nunan 1989:55). Pupils' comments helped me to further decide on the kind of songs to use and even how to use them during the lesson time in order to achieve better learning results. Data from both my journal and pupils' diaries enabled me to note my pupils' achievement in specific grammar structures or new vocabulary, and evaluate their general performance in class, which helped them to think about their own learning in a structured way, and assess their own needs and the progress they were making. Moreover, this helped even shy pupils to 'reflect on their responses and answer in their own time, without feeling rushed' (Hawkes et al. 2009:211).

My dual roles as teacher and researcher created certain advantages that I would have lacked as a detached observer. For example, my daily interaction with the students in negotiating meanings through English and participating in students' successes and failures provided an ideal vantage point for me as a researcher, giving me the chance to observe closely and make observation notes in my personal research diary. However, keeping in

⁴ Short questions were asked just to find out if they were happy with the learning process or if something was causing them difficulty and, making them feel unhappy or stressed.

mind that my own experiences and my personal opinion concerning the use of songs in the EFL context could have coloured ‘the perceptions of the research setting and also the constructions of reality’ (Croker 2009:11), I used triangulation in order to ensure greater objectivity. For example, my daily interaction with the students in negotiating meanings through English and participating in students’ successes and failures provided a vantage point to the whole project, giving me the chance to gather observation notes in my personal research journal without letting myself being carried away by personal judgements of the different emerging situations. Keeping my personal research journal gave me the chance to study students’ emotions and moods during the learning process and their reactions to the use of songs: whether they were motivated and whether they found it easier or not to understand new grammatical structures and vocabulary when using songs.

Focus Groups

The focus groups were conducted as the final stage of my study to investigate learners’ views on learning English in general, but more specifically, their thoughts about integrating songs into language learning.

The questionnaires, observations and diaries were supplemented by focus groups which were expected to yield rich material, giving all participants the chance to elaborate on different aspects of the use of songs in the EFL classroom. Focus groups enabled me to ensure that ‘participants would not only articulate their views and experiences about a particular topic, but also explain to the other members of the group why they hold those views’ (Burton 2007:187), offering pupils the opportunity for a more in-depth response and more detailed documentation of their personal opinion.

Using focus groups in Greek allowed me to collect more objective data and be more flexible in the way the questions were asked, allowing for variety and spontaneity in the responses, and the chance for participants to elaborate on certain issues that arose.

Although I had originally intended to videotape the focus groups, my final decision was to use audio with all focus groups. Video recording would have given me the opportunity to examine the participants' facial expressions, and to make relevant notes during the transcription of the conversation, but it may also have caused the whole conversation to become more stressful, making it difficult for my pupils to feel free to express their opinions. For this reason video recording was rejected. Since I had decided to use audio for recording the focus groups, it was obvious that I would not be able to record mannerisms or other non-verbal clues during the discussion. Therefore, it was important to follow Burton (2007) who suggests that you 'note such events and spend some time after each interview completing a research diary in which comments on the interviewee's mannerisms or other non-verbal communications can be stored to be used later in the analysis' (Burton 2007:210). I personally transcribed each focus group immediately after it took place, and further analysis helped me confirm patterns discovered during participant observation and explore new constructs. Handling this sensitive personal material to ensure confidentiality was my responsibility as I wanted to encourage pupils to freely express themselves. Examples of transcripts from each focus group can be found in Appendix H.

The data collected were intended to give information about whether pupils felt the use of songs helped them to acquire grammar and vocabulary in a stress-free, enjoyable learning environment, and in particular whether they acquired the target grammar or vocabulary more easily, unconsciously or effortlessly in comparison with the effort they had to make in the past in order to learn the language.

Focus groups which are defined by Sim (1998) as ‘a group interview centred on a specific topic (focus) and facilitated and co-ordinated by a moderator or facilitator – which seeks to generate primarily qualitative data, by capitalizing on the interaction that occurs within the group setting’ (Sim 1998: 346) allowed me to obtain data from a large number of participants in a short time enabling me ‘to observe interaction between group members’ (Bernard 2000:175). Through these interactions even “undisciplined” outbursts are not irrelevant or simply obstructive to the collection of data about what people “know” (Kitzinger 1994:9).

It is generally recommended that more than one focus group should be conducted so that ‘its effect may be countered, or at least diluted, by other groups’ (Sim 1998:348). In order to increase the reliability of the data, from the analysis of my focus groups, I conducted one focus group in each class. I considered that, if I wanted to help pupils in each focus group increase their confidence and express themselves more easily, ‘voicing their views’ (Sim 1998: 348), heterogeneous groups were undesirable. The focus groups were recorded with parental permission, transcribed and analysed. Responses were broken down and grouped according to categories emerging from the data or determined by the researcher.

For each focus group, a small tape recorder, was placed discretely in the middle of the table. In this way I managed to ‘catch all the details of the nuances of personal meaning’ (Dörnyei 2007:139). The audio recorder was used, supplemented by a set of field jottings⁵ in order to provide additional information that may not had been evident in the recordings. This included matters such as what happened before the recording began; contributions

⁵ Field jottings were brief notes to be fleshed out about later. They provide the stimulus to help researchers recall a lot of details they do not have time to write down during an observation or an interview (Fraenkel and Wallen 2001:472).

that were too quiet to be picked up by the microphone; who was speaking to whom; non-verbal behaviour of various kinds; and how pupils responded to certain stimuli. The aim of analyzing field jottings was to provide as detailed and accurate a description as possible of the nature of the setting, and of what was said and done while the observation was being carried out.

Pupils easily became accustomed to the use of microphone, which reduced any anxiety and allowed both them and me to concentrate on the questions and answers. Open-ended questions that would sound natural were chosen in order to get as much information about opinions and attitudes as possible, and understand ‘the reasoning behind their own opinions’ (Burton 2007:187). Care needed to be exercised throughout the whole process to ensure that participants were given every opportunity to express their opinions so that the results would not be biased by contributions from particularly dominant group members. I started with a general question which was very helpful, as Burton suggests, ‘because of the vast array of possible responses’ (Burton 2007:207), and ended with a closing question which would ensure that ‘the interviewee has a sense of ‘closure’ rather than drifting to an end’ (Burton 2007:207). So as to make it easy to identify pupils when transcribing the recording, I asked them to state their name at the beginning of the discussion. Pseudonyms were used when reporting the findings, to ensure anonymity.

Focus groups were particularly important in cases where weak or shy pupils did not feel comfortable enough to talk on their own with me. These pupils were brought together with a number of others to discuss particular issues. I functioned more as a facilitator of the discussion than a leader, following Dörnyei’s advice in ‘making sure that nobody dominates the floor and that even the shyer participants have a chance to express their views’ (Dörnyei 2007:145). Talking in Greek made them feel more comfortable, and at the

same time provided me quick and easy access to a number of participants and allowed me to collect a lot of data quickly. A series of carefully designed steps were devised, taking ethical issues into account, since informed consent had to be obtained from all interested parties. Using focus group methods was a time-saving way of gathering a relatively large amount of qualitative data, ensuring that pupils would not feel embarrassed or too stressed to talk, something that might have occurred if they had taken part in one-to-one interviews. It was hoped that, in the words of Dörnyei: ‘Participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging each other, and reacting to the emerging issues and points’(Dörnyei 2007:144) would result in a deep and insightful discussion and provide high-quality data. The exchange between them and their differing opinions and conflicts would also give me information not only on how they, as Kitzinger puts it ‘theorise their own point of view but how they do so in relation to other perspectives and how they put their own ideas to work’ (Kitzinger 1994:113) .

Finding time to select pupils for focus groups was a major problem, as was getting permission from their teacher to leave class. An allocation of one week per focus group was allowed for the time it would take to transcribe and analyse. Participants needed, therefore, to be selected with care. Taking into consideration the three research questions, and having observed pupils during the lesson observations, I made sure that participants in the focus groups were pupils who displayed specific types of behaviour (boredom, enthusiasm, disturbing behaviour, shyness etc.), in order to gather rich descriptive data from a panel of pupils with different ‘interests, attitudes, perspectives and assumptions’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:90), and gain access to different pupils’ thoughts, feelings or opinions. This was in line with Wilkinson and Birmingham who state that ‘the intention is that the discussion will be richer, deeper and more honest and incisive than any interview with a single participant’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:92).

Focus groups took place in the English language classroom and lasted between 25-35 minutes. In the focus groups I selected participants to allow for diversity and variety. As it was important that pupils should feel comfortable with each other, I put groups of friends together, as mentioned earlier, so as to be 'able to relate comments made in the focus group to events in their everyday, shared lives' (Burton 2007:187). A focus group from each class was created in order to gain some insight into their experience of using songs through different activities and be in a position to analyse interactions between them. I tried to be as friendly as possible in an attempt to make my pupils feel comfortable. I explained that there were no right or wrong answers to my questions, and all I wanted was their opinions on ideas related to the use of songs in the EFL classroom.

In order for participants to keep more focused on the questions, and to respond following a logical sequence, I followed Wilkinson and Birmingham (2003): 'using the funnelling technique, questions would move from general enquiries to more specific and focused questioning' (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:47). Early questions, therefore, focused on their general thinking on the use of songs and moved on to how they felt that songs helped or did not help them learn new grammar and new vocabulary.

I attempted through a list of key questions in Greek (Appendix G – translated into English), to gauge pupils' critical awareness of the effectiveness of songs for learning grammar and vocabulary. I devised these questions in advance in order to keep the discussion focused on the research questions, and allow for the possibility that new questions could arise during discussions.

I prepared ‘a list of key questions to be covered so that important issues would not be overlooked and the discussion would follow a logical progression’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:47). Questions were clustered or grouped around the main research themes which were based on the research questions, motivation, grammar and vocabulary acquisition (Appendix G). These themes were presented to all pupils in the focus groups at the beginning of the sessions. The initial questions were designed to help participants relax and encourage them to open up. I also tried to be neutral, without imposing any personal bias ‘encouraging the sharing of even the socially less-than-desirable’ (Dörnyei 2007:141). Each group consisted of 6-7 pupils, mainly groups of friends, and through brainstorming I encouraged ‘participants thinking together, inspiring and challenging each other and reacting to the emerging issues and points’ (Dörnyei 2007:237), and ensured ‘that the questions elicit sufficiently rich data and do not dominate the flow of the conversation’ (Dörnyei 2007:137).

Although, according to Burton, the most ‘advantageous strategy to help your participants to start thinking about the topic is to distribute the questionnaires before the focus group begins’ (Burton 2007:194), I did not find it necessary giving to my pupils the questions before the focus group in the form of a questionnaire, since I thought that it would be better to get instant responses in order to ascertain what they really felt about using songs. Giving pupils the questions beforehand would have given them time to think about the answers and potentially be influenced by others, even their parents, and this could have resulted in them giving me the ‘correct’ answer instead of their own opinion, particularly if it was a negative one. Thus, instead of distributing the questions before the focus group discussion in order to help pupils avoid any misunderstandings, I kept the questions short so that my pupils did not have to remember too much information at once, which could have been confusing making sure that each one was as direct and as precise as possible. Findings

using these methods were intended to give me a rounded and multidimensional account of the changes in emotions, in motivation and in learning outcomes. Pupils were asked to talk about their attitudes towards language learning through song and whether songs livened up the pace of lessons and made them relax or not. I let pupils dictate the pace without being rushed or interrupted and focused on specific details.

Some groups were vocal, interested and lively, and offered many new ideas about songs but others were quiet, unenthusiastic and not very interested in the songs to be used during lesson time. Having focus groups made up from pupils of both genders, different levels and different social behaviours allowed me to gather richer information, as the mix of characteristics resulted in general in the groups being more talkative and lively during the discussion.

Ethical issues and problems encountered

Research concerning peoples' lives, including research in education, inevitably involves ethical issues and as a result 'sound ethical practices should be observed whatever kind of research one is engaged in' (Open University 2001:138). To adhere to ethical guidelines, I needed to ensure that I carried out my investigation with respect and concern for the pupils taking part in this process, assuring both them and their parents of confidentiality both in terms of the research data and of the research process. Ethical considerations are, according to Altrichter, 'highly practical and conducive for the progress of insight' (Altrichter 1993:45). He further adds that the research situation is a learning situation itself and 'thus, teacher researchers [must] take care that their research activities comply with ethical quality criteria' (Altrichter 1993:44).

Since the participants were pupils under the age of 18, I had to obtain the formal consent of their parents, though pupils were also informed in detail about the whole research process, according to the participation rights that are vital during ethical research and ‘include children being well informed, and having their own views listened to and respected by adults’ (Fraser et al.2004:98). I studied carefully the feasibility, clarity and significance of my study and then considered the ethical implications before making a start. I followed the *Observe Protocol*, making sure before beginning my study that participants, their parents and the Ministry of Education had been informed and that the necessary permissions and approvals had been obtained by sending a consent form (Appendix A).

As Fraenkel and Wallen (2001) state: ‘It is a fundamental responsibility of every researcher to do whatever is necessary to ensure that participants in a research study are protected from any physical or psychological harm or danger that may arise from research procedures’ (Fraenkel and Wallen 2001:23). Thus the first task was to obtain the consent of the parents of the pupils (Appendix B) who were going to be recorded and observed. They were assured that their children would be respected as individuals and that their words in the transcripts would remain anonymous, ensuring them that the privacy of the research participants was protected, in accordance with Swann’s (2001) ‘ethical research’. Fortunately, almost all parents signed the consent form, but as some parents were sceptical about signing, I needed to reassure them in a face-to-face discussion that once the data had been collected, no one else would have access to it.

However, there were some problems: as mentioned earlier, I had intended to use a control group, i.e. a class which would not work with songs in order to determine if the use of songs had an effect on pupils’ emotions and led to more effective learning of both grammar and vocabulary. There were some parents of children in the control group who,

after realising that their child's class would not follow the same teaching procedure (implementing songs and related activities) as the other two classes, reacted negatively and, moreover, complained to the headmaster that all pupils should be taught using the same teaching methods and the same teaching material. As a result, I had to change my research plans, and in the end was obliged to use the same methods for all classes. To compensate for this, and still be able to gather information on pupils' reactions, the classes had two lessons: one where songs were used and one where songs were not used. In this way I could compare their reactions and how effective the lesson had been in the two different cases. If the results from observations and questionnaires differed during the specific lessons with and without songs, then this could be a starting point for finding out how much the songs had or had not influenced the learning process.

Following the British Educational Research Association (BERA) guidelines, I also made sure 'that all participants in the research understood the process in which they were to be engaged, including why their participation was necessary, how it would be used and how and to whom it would be reported' (BERA 2004:4). A detailed research plan was sent to the Ministry of Education for approval prior to starting my investigation in order to comply with federal regulations. There were three very important issues I had to address: (1) 'the protection of participants from harm, (2) the ensuring of confidentiality of research data and (3) the knowing deception of research subjects' (Dörnyei 2007:24). Pupils were treated with respect as I sought their cooperation in this research endeavour and I reassured them that data from the video camera would be treated confidentially.

Even though I had incorporated video stills to accompany specific parts of the lesson transcripts, as discussed earlier I was not able to include them as part of my data since they raised a number of ethical issues concerning the anonymity of pupils taking part in this

study. In effect, they did not actually provide any more evidence than the data obtained through my observation notes and, as Walker maintains, ‘unlike the written word, photographs carry little with them in the form of high cultural baggage’ (Walker 1993:80). Tests were also administered at the end of the lesson as part of the usual learning and evaluation process. It was not possible to compare the results of the lesson including songs with the results of the lesson not including songs, since it would have meant comparing two different lessons which had different functions, different teaching targets, different vocabulary and different grammar structures. Nevertheless, the results showed improvement after the use of songs, even in a different lesson, particularly in the case of really weak pupils.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

Analytical Tools

Introduction

Analysis of the data was challenging since I had a considerable amount of data collected from different research instruments. Dealing at the same time with both quantitative and qualitative data was a ‘complex, laborious and time consuming’ (Stroh 2000:226) process. Analysis, according to Atkinson and Coffey (1996), is not a simple matter but a complex process of ‘classifying, categorizing, coding, or collating data. It is not just a question of identifying forms of speech or regularities of action. Fundamentally, analysis is about the representation or reconstruction of social phenomena’ (Atkinson and Coffey 1996:108).

Analysis took place throughout the data collection and coding process as certain patterns, themes and issues began to emerge. The data provided me with a rich source of information, although I had to decide what was important and what was not, imposing my own interpretations on the different events occurring. I needed to be explicitly mindful and selective, constantly making choices in order to address my research questions. Using my critical judgement and imagination I was able to decide how best to proceed at any particular point, allowing for findings to add more information and contribute to the emerging picture.

According to the positivist paradigm, ‘to produce sound knowledge, it is essential to follow explicit or transparent procedures or methods’ (E891, 2007:79). So in order to achieve procedural objectivity (E891, 2007:79), I attempted to eliminate the biases that could have

arisen through the influence of my personal attributes, in order to produce sound knowledge that was as objective as possible. With this in mind, after careful thought, I decided to use a computer-assisted quantitative data analysis programme, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-17.0), the ‘software package most commonly used in applied linguistics and educational research’ (Dörnyei 2007:198), in order to analyse quantitative data quickly and accurately and to carefully measure the phenomena being studied, focusing on statistical relationships among variables. In addition, I decided to analyse qualitative data manually since it would have been unnecessarily time-consuming learning another computer programme in addition to SPSS for analysing qualitative data.

I drew together and compared discussions of similar themes giving particular attention ‘to minority opinions and examples that do not fit with the researcher’s overall theory’ (Kitzinger 1995:301). Analysing and comparing the answers to the questions, the expressions of criticism, pupils’ attitudes and experiences I studied whether the incorporation of songs had a positive or negative impact on grammatical and vocabulary outcomes in their view. In order to triangulate the data, I made a systematic comparison between my classroom observations, the responses from pupils in the focus group discussions and their responses in the questionnaires. I tried to find relationships, connections or contrasts between pupils’ comments in focus group discussions and answers given in questionnaires. Through this detailed and systematic triangulation of data I linked themes that emerged through the qualitative analysis of observations and focus group discussions with the results produced through the statistical analysis of the questionnaires. A close reading of the lesson transcripts and careful study of pupils’ reactions during lesson time guided my choice of the participants that would take part in focus group discussions and allowed me to explore any similarities or differences emerging through triangulation. Pupils were observed carefully both before and after using songs in

order to identify differences in behaviour and any general reactions that were caused by the use of songs resulting in better or worse learning performance.

Quantitative data: Statistical Procedures

The statistics obtained through SPSS ranged from simple descriptive such as calculating the mean (i.e. the average) of the scores to complex statistical procedures. The first task was to systematically code all the data, and after creating a data file, move on to inputting the coded data. All pupils' answers had to be converted to numbers given that, in the words of Dörnyei (2007): 'because numbers are meaningless in themselves and are all too easy to mix up, a major element of the coding phase is to define each variable and then to compile coding specifications for every possible "value" that the particular variable can take' (Dörnyei 2007:199).

The results of the questionnaires were presented as a series of charts, tables and statistics which offered an insight into trends in behaviour across the given population. The data also lent itself to a wide range of statistical techniques to provide frequencies, means, percentages, ranges etc. The data was analysed using statistical procedures to explore relationships between the assessed variables allowing 'different characteristics of the population to be analysed and for the comparison of different variables identified in the questionnaire' (Morrison and Pole 2003:52).

Statistics were divided into two principal areas: Descriptive statistics and Inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize sets of numerical data in order to conserve time and space. Providing the mean and the range (i.e. minimum and maximum values) of a variable is deemed to be a more professional way of describing respondents'

answers than listing all the scores that have been obtained. Standard deviation of the results (an index of the average disparity among the scores) contributes to a well-rounded description of the scores that would satisfy most purposes. Through inferential statistics the computer also tested whether the results that I observed in my sample were powerful enough to generalize across the whole population of Cypriot state primary school pupils. ‘In order to venture any generalization concerning the wider population and not just the particular sample’ (Dörnyei 2007:209), I needed to show that the difference between girls and boys or between the different age groups was significant in a statistical sense.

Questionnaires

Since I was interested in the positive or negative impact the use of songs had on motivation and further more on grammar and vocabulary learning, I had to evaluate the differences by utilising a pre- and post- questionnaire which would later on be statistically analysed through the use of SPSS, enabling me to ‘determine where both positive and negative changes had taken place using sets of questions’ (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:22) which would be the same in both pre- and post-questionnaires.

Closed questions were easier to convert to the numerical format for SPSS analysis while open-ended questions which were later given to pupils after the post-questionnaires in order to give them the advantage to respond, giving their thoughts and opinions, were harder to summarise into specific categories after being identified ‘through the range of responses actually received from the respondents’ (Pallant 2010:8). Common responses from pupils were listed ‘under the same variable name, under the same numerical code’ (Pallant 2010:8).

Before entering the information from my questionnaires, it was necessary to decide how I would define and label each of the variables and how I would assign numbers to each of the possible responses. After pupils were asked to reply to questions by ticking boxes, their answers were coded by a number which was to be entered in the SPSS data analysis program. This made it easier 'to obtain an average score in scaled or Likert-type questions in order to compare across questions' (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:20). The quantitative data collected were divided following Dörnyei (2007:208) into three main categories:

- (1) Nominal or categorical data which was the least precise data type and was associated with variables that had no numerical values, such as gender or race. For analysing categorical variables I used frequencies, keeping in mind that 'it doesn't make any sense asking for means, standard deviations etc. for categorical variables, such as sex' (Pallant 2010:55).
- (2) Ordinal data which involved ranked numbers and would provide ordinal data because the answers could be placed on a 'frequency' continuum, but the values would not correspond to any regular measurement on a scale.
- (3) Interval data which could be seen as ordinal data in which the various values were at an equal distance – or intervals – from each other.

SPSS provided me with the opportunity to use more complicated and often more appropriate statistical techniques which I had not been able to use with Excel when analysing the data from my initial study. The main disadvantage of using SPSS is 'that is you will have to learn how to run these programs' (Bryman and Cramer 1990:16).

Learning to use SPSS was not easy and it took about two years of special courses to work out how best to use it for my study.

A further characteristic of the data that had a special statistical significance was whether it was 'normally distributed'. This means that if we plot the data we get a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, which has the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies towards the extremes. In order to check if my data was normally distributed I had to run a normality plot test (analyse-descriptive statistics-explore) which offered a special 'Normality plots with tests' function under the 'Plots' option. Statistically non-significant results should be ignored keeping in mind that significance is measured by a probability coefficient (P) which can range from 0 to +1. In the social sciences we typically consider a result significant if $p < 0.05$ (*indicates $p < 0.05$). Finally paired samples t-tests were also used to compare two sets of scores, two variables obtained from the same participants but measured more than once, before and after the use of songs.

T-tests which 'are used when you have two groups (e.g. males and females) or two sets of data (before and after), and you wish to compare the mean score on some continuous variable' (Pallant 2010:105) and Wilcoxon signed ranks tests and analysis of variance were used to determine the overall significance of the use of songs, and in particular to examine the hypothesis that songs could contribute to more effective learning of grammar and vocabulary through a more relaxed and enjoyable atmosphere. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) which is used in cases where you wish to compare mean scores of two or more groups on a continuous variable, 'looking at the impact of only one independent variable on you dependent variable' (Pallant 2010:105) was used to compare 'the variance (variability in scores) between the different groups (believed to be due to the independent variable) with the variability within each of the groups' (Pallant 2010:249). Through the ANOVA analysis I measured pupils under different conditions during their EFL lesson. Studying the F ratio which 'represents the variance between the groups divided by the variance within the groups' (Pallant 2010:249), I studied whether there was more

variability within the pupil group being studied caused by the independent variable, the use of songs.

The paired-samples t-test was used to find out whether there was a statistically significant difference in the mean scores for the lessons before the use of songs (pre-questionnaires) and the lessons after the use of songs (post-questionnaires) comparing the same three different age-groups of pupils. The paired-samples t-test was used to compare the mean scores of the pupils at the two different interventions and assess each pupil when songs were not used during lessons and later on when songs were used. This enabled me to assess them 'on some continuous measure at Time 1 (pre-questionnaires) and then again at Time 2 (post-questionnaires) after exposing them to some experimental manipulation or intervention' (Pallant 2010:243). In my case this was the use of songs in the EFL learning process. The task was first to determine the overall significance by measuring the probability (p) value which, if it was less than 0.05, according to Pallant, 'you can conclude that there is a significant difference between your two scores' (Pallant 2010:246); and second, provided that we had established that there was a significant difference, to compare the mean values in order to find out which scores (pre- or post- questionnaires) were higher.

Normal distribution of the data had a special statistical significance. In order to decide whether my data was normally distributed I plotted the data to see if I would get a symmetrical, bell-shaped curve, which would have the greatest frequency of scores in the middle, with smaller frequencies towards the extremes. This was in line with Dörnyei who states that 'the explore procedure of SPSS (Analyse-descriptive statistics – explore) offers a special Normality plots with tests function under the "plots" option' (Dörnyei 2007:208).

Using descriptive statistics, I summarised sets of numerical data in order to conserve time and space and was able to establish the mean and the range (i.e. minimum and maximum values) of a variable in order to describe the respondents' answers. Descriptive statistics enabled me to describe the special characteristics of my sample. I also included the standard deviation of the results, in order to achieve a well-rounded description of the scores that would satisfy most purposes and would help me 'assess how reliable the mean is as a measure of central tendency' (Gayle 2000:381).

Analysing qualitative data

The first step in qualitative data analysis was to transform the recordings into a textual form. This was a time-consuming process, particularly with regard to the focus groups, where the text also needed to be translated since I had decided to put the questions to my pupils in Greek in order for them to feel more confident in expressing themselves. The greatest advantage of the transcription process was that it allowed me to understand and digest the data thoroughly, and add more detail from video recordings from 'the nonverbal aspects of the original communication situation such as the body language of the respondents' (Dörnyei 2007:246).

A grounded theory approach

Grounded-theory was selected as the analytic approach for this study in order to examine pupils' experience of using songs in the EFL classroom, gather their perceptions, and 'systematically incorporate all of the learners and their comments' (Yan and Horwitz 2008:154). Analysing qualitative data began with the identification of key themes and patterns, organizing, managing and retrieving the most meaningful bits of my data. I followed 'the usual way of going about this is by assigning tags or labels to the data, based

on our concepts' (Atkinson and Coffey 1996:26). Through this coding procedure I looked for links between the data sets. First, through coding I tried to segment data into more general categories, linking different segments or instances in the data, following Atkinson and Coffey in 'bringing those fragments of data together to create categories of data that we define as having some common property or element' and which are 'about or relating to some particular topic or theme' (Atkinson and Coffey 1996:27).

Pupils' responses from focus groups and lesson transcripts were analysed and grouped into six themes (see Table 4.1), which were partly pre-determined from the literature (concept driven) but at the same time emerged from my data (data driven), and were associated with motivation, anxiety and vocabulary and grammar learning, reflecting my three research questions. Data from both lesson observations and interviews were coded according to the six themes. I first read all the transcripts of the lesson observations and focus groups intensively, and then grouped together data with similar themes in relation to the research questions. The next stage was to organise the findings into the thematically defined clusters referred to as affinities (as mentioned earlier: motivation, anxiety and vocabulary and grammar learning) which were furthered compared and rearranged. Later on I tried to find any relationships between and among the affinities linking them together into six general themes (Table 4.1) 'based on comments that had "correlational" or associative connotations' (Horwitz and Yan 2008:157). For example a pupil from a fourth-grade class (9-10 age group) commented during focus groups:

'...I can't keep up with fast tunes ... I prefer slower songs ... although I must admit that I love listening to any kind of songs, if I have an accompanied activity to complete, I have to try hard and listen carefully in order to manage completing it... I could say that it stresses me a little bit...'

As a result placing this utterance in the following themes resulted in the *'problems and negative feelings while using songs in the learning process'*.

Table 4.1 The six general themes.

	Themes
Motivation	1 Problems caused by negative feelings while using songs in the learning process.
	2 Positive feelings by the use of songs affecting the learning process.
Learning new grammar	3 The positive contribution of using songs to understanding new grammatical structures.
	4 The negative contribution of using songs while learning new grammatical structures
Learning new vocabulary	5 The positive contribution of using songs to understanding new vocabulary.
	6 The negative contribution of using songs while learning new vocabulary.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), well-collected qualitative data can ‘focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what “real life” is like’ (Miles and Huberman 1994:10). In what follows I outline my qualitative data analysis procedures. These methods of analysis which are based on the grounded theory approach, involve comparing, contrasting and classifying the data. Transcripts were examined for evidence of practices which supported critical reflection. They were also examined for awareness of the difficulties experienced by students in this respect and for evidence of the impact of use of the materials. I first coded data by labelling passages within the transcripts which expressed a particular idea or referred to a relevant event. Coding broke the data up into manageable chunks and I gave these extracts names, or tags, which enabled me to manipulate them; for example to group them together.

In order to organize and analyse data from methods such as journal writing I looked for emerging themes and patterns. I tried to find out certain ideas or words frequently repeated, particularly those that indicated certain types of behaviour. Following Hood's (2009) suggestion that it is better to 'allow the codes to emerge from the data as the analysis proceeds' (Hood 2009:79) I counted 'the number of times particular incidents, behaviours, or utterances occur' (Dörnyei 2007:123) and to strengthen validity and reliability through triangulation, I collected data from focus groups and lesson observations which after being transcribed were coded. The process of reading all transcripts carefully and several times generated ideas about the development of a framework. The focus groups and lessons transcripts were very rich in information on each of the themes.

I then returned to my transcripts and coded them using the six themes. However it seemed that the themes were both too general and too restrictive; general because they did not allow me to identify particular issues, and restrictive because they did not allow me to see if there were any other issues that could not be coded to any of them. I wanted the data to 'speak for themselves' and my coding was not entirely open, following a more data-driven analysis. I coded the transcripts according to the six general themes, attaching one or more keywords to the text in order to permit later identification of a statement. Using Gläser's and Strauss' (1967) as stated in Bryant and Charmaz (2007) constant comparisons method, I gathered all the transcripts together for each class, chose a random transcript from the first class, then read and coded it.

The next task was to select a second random transcript from lessons and focus groups and apply the codes that had emerged from the first one. In the second transcript new ideas appeared; I therefore added new codes to my list and revisited 'transcript one' to check

whether the new codes could be applied. This process was repeated until all transcripts were coded. Every time a new code emerged, I went back to all previously coded transcripts to find out if the new code could be used. This process was fairly labour-intensive, involving reading and re-reading the transcripts and identifying coherent categories, and finally ending up with a large number of codes for each transcript. I then looked for any links between the various codes of each group individually, and developed categories related to one of the six general themes. Through the use of simple hand tabulations I tried to search and count the frequency with which a particular theme occurred, or to keep track of how many respondents touched on different themes. The final generic process of qualitative data analysis was interpreting the data and drawing conclusions from all qualitative tools. After the main themes were compared, I drew final conclusions following Dörnyei (2007) in ‘appraising the generated patterns and insights, and finally selecting a limited number of main themes or storylines to elaborate on’ (Dörnyei 2007: 257).

Observations

As Dörnyei notes: ‘no matter how accurate and elaborate a transcript is, it will never capture the reality of the recorded situation’ (Dörnyei 2007:246). So the advantage of video recording is that it can capture information that would get lost by audio recording. Video recording can show important details about body language and contextual information. When transcribing video recordings it was useful to have an extra column next to the verbal transcript and this was a strategy I adopted for writing comments on pupils’ behaviour and attitudes.

Pupils diaries which were completed after the two lessons which were being observed and videotaped (one including songs and one without songs) were carefully studied. Further information was also added from my personal journal which included detail on pupils' reactions mostly weak and annoying ones or very strong and advanced pupils who regularly disrupted the lesson.

Focus Groups

Analysing the focus group results was a time-consuming and difficult stage of the analytical process. It involved reading and re-reading the transcripts, reflecting on them and comparing with notes from journals and diaries. Highlighting with different colours allowed me to add an informative label in the margin which could later be used for comparison with data from other focus groups. The process of analysis after the transcribing and coding process using the guideline questions as initial categories was followed by constant comparisons which were 'carried out with the data to detect divergent observations that relate to variables within the sample population' (Powell and Single 1996:503).

In order to analyse data gathered from focus groups, I first listened to the whole discussion in order to get a general overview and then transcribed the parts which added information related to the participants' thoughts and concerns about the use of songs. Initially the code words came from the literature related to my research questions. For example, when I coded a focus group for the first time, if a segment suggested that the learner was motivated, I would attach the code word 'motivation' to the text. If I decided that another segment of text referred to the same phenomenon, I gave it the same code and grouped it with other segments identified with the same code by copying and pasting it into the appropriate file. I compared new units of text to those that were already coded to see if the

same code might apply and started noting comments and ideas about the already coded segments. Finally, in line with Murray, ‘new codes emerged and existing codes merged to eventually become categories’ (Murray2009:54).

At this point, readers should be reminded that the focus groups questions were based on my six-dimensional model of themes (Table 4.1). The first idea for analysing my data was to use these as codes. However, after reading all the focus group and video transcripts carefully, I decided that my initial model needed some amendments. I needed to find a way to integrate the findings from my other research instruments, for example my personal journals and my pupils’ diaries with those from the focus groups. In constantly revisiting the qualitative data, I was able to find important details that added relevant information. Reading all the transcripts carefully and repeatedly generated ideas about the development of a new framework. It seemed reasonable to make further distinctions, as some of those statements regarded the motivation theme. I therefore ended up with the final theme framework. In Table 4.1 these are presented and explained.

The initial study: lessons learned

Piloting this study which involved implementing songs ‘towards delivering foreign languages in the primary sector’ (Enever and Watts 2009:219) helped me gain in-depth insights into the methods and procedures that should be followed during the main study. Appropriately detailed analysis through mainly quantitative data-collection methods were employed following ethical procedures, which led to a final decision to adopt a mixed method approach in my main study in order to provide cohesive insights into the EFL learning process and the impact songs had on pupils. Keeping in mind Hargreaves (1996)

claims, I managed through my initial study to gain all relevant experience and knowledge in order to demonstrate later in my main study ‘competence and clear evidence to justify doing things in one way rather than another’ (Hargreaves 1996:12).

Methodology and methods

In order to study ‘the particularity and complexity of a single case’ (Dörnyei 2007:151), a case study approach was adopted for my initial study, involving a sample of the 22 pupils in one fifth-grade classroom (E2 - 10-11 age group) at the local primary school where I work and where the main study would later be carried out. Having no particular reason other than maybe a more friendly relationship with the classroom teacher, I decided to work with this specific group (the second my three fifth-grade classes), since my relationship with the teacher would make it easier for me to ask for any extra time I might need with the pupils for lesson observations or for pupils to complete questionnaires. Even though this single case study could not be representative of my research population, it allowed me to study students in real situations, offering me ‘insights not easily gained by other approaches’ (Burgess et al. 2006:59). Action research proved to be attractive, since I was conducting a small-scale investigation, which aimed to link research with practice, putting the ‘emphasis on practice and problem-solving over a particular period of time’ (Burgess et al. 2006:60).

Questionnaires

Although the analysis of students’ satisfaction with the musical approach to language learning (Figure 4.1) (Figure 4.2) and their attitudes towards foreign language learning through the use of excel analysis after the completion of questionnaires revealed that the use of songs could affect positively pupils’ EFL learning, it also made clear that I needed

to be more vigilant about keeping constantly in mind the research questions in terms of the design and execution in my main study. Moreover, I learned the need for absolute clarity in the writing of the questions, so that there could be no confusion or misunderstanding. In order to gain specific pieces of information through my questionnaires in the main study, I decided to give pupils various response options to choose from which were numerically coded and entered onto a computer database. This gave me quantitative data which could later on be statistically analysed.

Questions which in the initial study proved not to add any relevant data were omitted and other questions were added in order to gain more data relevant to my research questions. These amendments to the kinds of questions were made to help yield answers that would tie in more directly with the research questions. For example, the questions about pronunciation and other questions about speaking did not give me any information relating to my research questions, since I was not researching pupils' speaking ability. They were therefore omitted for the main study. In addition, giving more careful thought to the kind of questions to be included in the questionnaires, I realised that nearly all the questions in my initial study focused on the positive side of the use of songs, something which would almost certainly have led participants to answer in a positive way. Aiming therefore for a more balanced set of questions in my main study I included positive and negative questions, adding some open questions at the end in order to let pupils answer in a more objective and honest way.

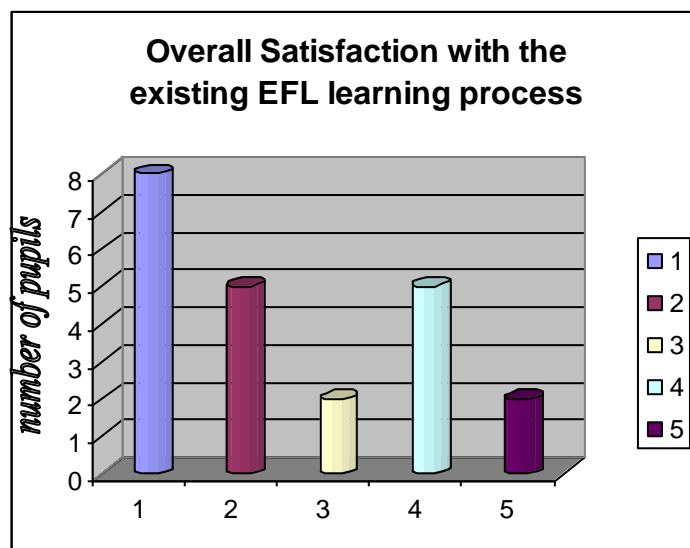
Sample

The initial study made it clear how difficult it would have been to include other schools in my study on practical and research grounds, which led to my decision to not include them in my main study. For example, one colleague in a different school to whom I gave the

questionnaires for distribution to her pupils during my initial study took a very long time to return them and showed no enthusiasm about the whole process of implementing songs during her EFL lesson time. This also helped me come to the conclusion that involving other EFL teachers would have been unacceptably time-consuming and might have raised questions about the validity of the data.

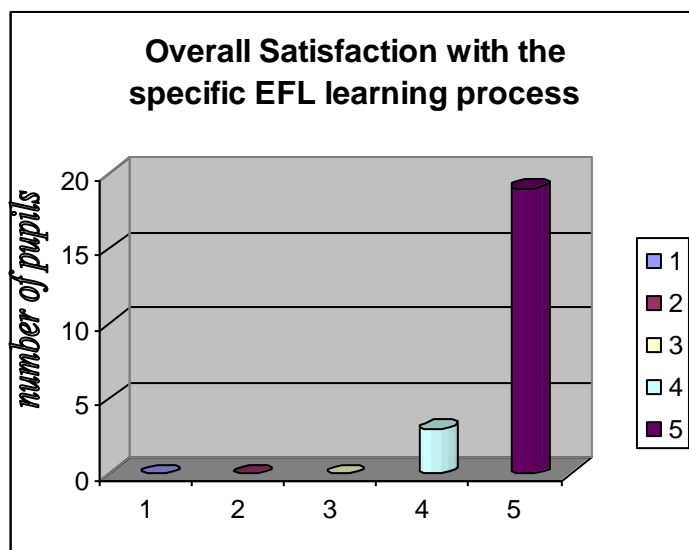
Conducting the main study just in my own school would not detract from the robustness of my investigation since the number of pupils taking part in this research would be enough to give me valid information and provide answers to my research questions by providing me with a sample that could be considered as representative having ‘the essential, or relevant, characteristics of a population’ (Fraenkel and Wallen 2001:143), giving me the chance to investigate pupils of three different age groups and of different levels.

*Figure 4.1 Overall satisfaction with the existing EFL learning process-**before** the use of songs*



1= Very Dissatisfied, 2=Dissatisfied, 3=Neutral, 4=Satisfied, 5=Very Satisfied

Figure 4.2 Overall satisfaction with the existing EFL learning process- **after** the use of songs



1= Strongly disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Initial Study data analysis and findings

The initial study gave me a chance to pilot my data analysis techniques and later on make any necessary changes to my choices for better statistical results in my main study.

Statistical methods using Microsoft Excel were used to analyse quantitative data from my initial study from which I drew my conclusions. Data analysis was complex and time-consuming, so in order to avoid errors in manual statistical analysis, Microsoft Excel was used as it offered a solution for managing the amount of material that quantitative methods produced. The amount of data that would have been produced later on in the main study made me change my mind and adopt the statistical package SPSS.

Analysing the quantitative data in my initial study made it clear that qualitative data would have added useful information to the rest of quantitative data. I had been thinking of using a qualitative software tool and more specifically NVivo8 to organise my qualitative data,

but practical and time considerations ruled this out and I finally decided to analyse the qualitative data manually. It seemed clear that audiovisual recordings were required to allow for a more objective in-depth study of the learning process, since I was at the same time a teacher and a researcher, and it would not have been easy to study closely all reactions, both my own and those of the pupils. In line with my aim to produce replicable data, the audiovisual recordings were intended to preserve ‘the richness of the classroom for subsequent explorations in behavioral encoding’ (Biddle 1967:341) helping to ensure that important details were not missed. After considerable reflection, I decided to use only audio recordings for the focus group discussions in order to give to my pupils the chance to feel more comfortable about expressing their feelings and thoughts.

Researcher bias

Researcher bias was an issue that needed to be addressed both in my initial and main study, since I was the only researcher interpreting the data and it was therefore carried out entirely from my own point of view. According to positivist approaches, in order for qualitative research to produce sound knowledge, it is essential to follow explicit or transparent procedures or methods. Therefore the researcher ‘needs to adopt a *tabular rasa* orientation’. Gläser and Strauss (1967) propose that the researcher’s *theoretical sensitivity* should only ‘appear when the data has already been collected and partially analyzed so that the concepts and hypotheses that have emerged can be combined with existing knowledge’ (Dörnyei 2007:39). The intention, therefore, was to enrich the quantitative data in my main study, not only from the findings of focus groups but also from notes in my personal journal of observed behaviour. I could also draw on my personal experience of a series of workshops and seminars where I presented and shared my thoughts with other teachers about using songs in the EFL classroom.

In this way I captured the emotional state of pupils, and I was also able to determine the effect of songs on the dependent variable, grammar and vocabulary acquisition, which was measured by the pre- and post- questionnaires in order to find out if there was any improvement after the lesson. I continuously examined the data, highlighting certain points in the text or making comments in the margins and deciding on which extracts were likely to yield important information in terms of my research questions and which also were worth further study. Quantitative data were later processed ‘to produce numerical results to which statistical techniques can be applied’ (OU Study Guide 2001:117). In this way, others would be able to ‘replicate the research, which some regard as necessary in order to test whether the knowledge produced is sound, or whether it has been distorted by error or bias on the part of the researcher’ (OU Study Guide 2007:79), and this helped to assure the quality of the research and the credibility of the research findings.

Finally, following Guba’s and Lincoln’s (1994) criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research, *credibility* (establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participants in the research), *transferability* (the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings) and *conformability* (the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others) were all taken fully into account in the analysis of the data in my main study.

PART III

Findings

CHAPTER 5

Findings

Introduction

Results from my initial study suggested that songs in the classroom could be a contributory factor to successful language learning through improving memory and providing an enjoyable and relaxing learning atmosphere in which pupils are less likely to experience stress when learning new vocabulary or grammatical structures. These results led to a subtle readjustment of the research questions and a refinement of the research methods as mentioned in Chapter 3 on methodology and methods. The findings from the sample from the initial study of a fifth grade (10-11 age group) classroom, indicated that the majority of the pupils were indeed motivated by songs integrated into their English lessons, and that making songs an integral part of the learning and teaching process can open up pupils' minds and make them more receptive to language learning. My main study sought to extend these findings by enlarging the sample to gather more data in terms of amount and variety, and providing more detailed examples of both lesson plans and test results pupils achieved from the activities linked to the songs.

The findings of the main study are presented and discussed here in relation to the three research questions. The data collected offered considerable insights into the way pupils felt and reacted to the use of songs during the EFL learning process. Both quantitative and qualitative data provided a wide range of responses to the research questions and the research hypothesis, and made it possible to triangulate the data. The variety of methods and research instruments were intended to generate a rich and comprehensive picture of each classroom being observed, and produce largely consistent and convergent results.

Using different methods allowed me ‘to be more flexible, integrative and holistic’ (Harrison and Reilly 2011:19) in order to address all three research questions.

For quantitative analysis, I first needed to convert data into numerical codes to enable them to be processed statistically. Simple numerical computations followed once I had coded the data. The next step was to look at simple frequencies.

The analysis and discussion of the findings begins with a discussion of the quantitative data, followed by the qualitative data. In all cases the participants have been given pseudonyms.

Findings for Research Question 1:

Can the emotional aspects of music and furthermore the lyrics of a song create a positive climate for language learning, and aid students’ motivation?

An analysis of pupils’ comments both in focus group discussions and in lesson transcripts revealed their positive reactions. It also revealed how effectively and effortlessly language was learned by most of the pupils. They reported their positive emotional state and attitude which was evident during the lesson time and led to an increased attention and a willingness to participate during the discussion part, which showed ‘how ‘learners’ emotional responses were engendered by particular topics and experiences’ (Garrett and Young:221) through the use of songs. In order to demonstrate triangulation of the data, I provide later in the Findings chapter a balanced discussion of both quantitative and qualitative analysis results.

Foreign language anxiety was often witnessed during lesson time before the use of songs, with pupils stating their frustration and complaining about difficulties they had in following the rest of the class. Although these comments were rare, what was most evident was boredom, and this contributed to poor performance since pupils were not willing to participate. Songs played a part in the revival of their interest in foreign language learning, leading to a rise in the percentages in the post-questionnaire variables referring to pupils' positive emotions, as compared with the results from the pre-questionnaire.

The results from the questionnaires gave evidence of the positive results of using songs. Percentages of the positive emotions from the use of songs integrated into lessons rose between the pre- and post-questionnaires. Comparing the results of the descriptive statistics of question "Do you like learning grammar?" in the pre- and post- questionnaires and from related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks test I came to the conclusion that there existed significant difference between pre- and post- variable 'I like to learn grammar' ($p = 0.023 > 0.05$) and the same significant difference existed also in the related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks test which revealed a difference between pre- and post-questionnaire variable 'I like learning new vocabulary' ($p=0.022<0.05$).

Results also from qualitative data gathered from observations and focus group discussions proved how important it was to cope with and eventually overcome negative feelings while learning language through the use of motivating teaching material which can alleviate pupils' negative experiences and support their interest and enthusiasm as mentioned further down in the focus group transcripts.

The majority of pupils (61%) agreed in their post-questionnaires and open-ended questionnaires that the use of songs in the EFL lesson made them feel more relaxed while

learning grammar and made learning more effective (see Table 5.1) and over half (54%) expressed the same view in relation to vocabulary learning. This reflects Shen's contention that the fact that a song possesses many intrinsic merits could 'render it an invaluable source for language teaching' (Shen 2009:88). Instead of following the traditional way of teaching, which involves cramming our pupils' heads with a multitude of activities to be completed either in their activity books or their notebooks, EFL can be taught in a more 'relaxed and enjoyable way by using English songs' (Shen 2009:88).

Table 5.1 Does the use of songs relax you and lead to more effective grammar learning?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	104	60.8	60.8	60.8
	No	67	39.2	39.2	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

Table 5.2 Does the use of songs relax you and lead to more effective vocabulary learning?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	93	54.4	54.4	54.4
	No	78	45.6	45.6	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

The results from the post-questionnaires were further examined in conjunction with those elicited from qualitative tools, in order to triangulate the data and improve validity.

After converting data into numerical codes in order for them to be processed statistically, the next step was to look at simple frequencies. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted in order to compare results from the pre- and post-questionnaires, and to determine whether (1) differences existed among participants, and (2) whether there were

any significant differences at the .05 level of significance between pre-questionnaires and post-questionnaires. The application of ANOVA improved the reliability and validity of my study, and it allowed me, in addition, to test the effect of the use of songs on learning grammar and vocabulary, which Hatch and Farhady (1982:128) describe as ‘the effect of method (the independent variable) on proficiency (the dependent variable)’. ANOVA also revealed that there were no differences in the results according to grade level and gender.

Furthermore, a comparison of the results from pre- and post-questionnaires on using songs to learn grammar and vocabulary (Table 5.3) revealed through Wilcoxon signed ranks test that there was a difference in response between the pre- and post-questionnaires question: ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’ ($p = 0.023 < 0.05$) and pre- and post-questionnaires question ‘Do you like learning new vocabulary?’ ($p=0.022<0.05$), showing that pupils liked learning grammar and vocabulary through songs more than following a traditional lesson.

Table 5.3 Descriptive Statistics of Pre-questionnaire and Post-questionnaire question ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’

Pre-questionnaire ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’	Frequency	Percent
Always	69	40.4
Usually	37	21.6
Sometimes	32	18.7
Rarely	15	8.8
Never	18	10.5
Total	171	100.0

Post-questionnaire ‘Do you like learning grammar?’	Frequency	Percent
Always	89	52.0
Usually	37	21.6
Sometimes	21	12.3
Rarely	12	7.0
Never	12	7.0
Total	171	100.0

Asking pupils about what they felt while learning grammar and vocabulary both before the introduction of songs and after the use of songs through the pre- and post-questionnaires, it was noticeable that positive feelings were more dominant during the use of songs. Most importantly evidence demonstrated clearly that whereas 40 % of the pupils were feeling bored before the use of songs and as a result they were de-motivated, just 19 % of the pupils felt bored after the use of songs.

Table 5.4 Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-questionnaire variable: 'Feelings while learning new grammar'

	<i>Pre-questionnaire 'feelings while learning Grammar'</i>		<i>Post-questionnaire 'feelings while learning Grammar'</i>	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Enthusiastic	26	15.4	42	24.6
Happy	31	18.3	78	45.6
Stressed	12	7.1	4	2.3
Nervous	13	7.7	5	2.9
Worried	7	4.1	5	2.9
Confused	7	4.1	3	1.8
Bored	70	41.4	32	18.7
Angry	3	1.8	2	1.2

Apart from the knowledge gain, pupils appeared to be enjoying their learning and what became clear as the research progressed was the link between songs and increased levels of motivation and confidence. Table 5.5 adds further data concerning the positive emotions which were also revealed during lesson observations. On first listening to the song some pupils had seemed very shy. However, after listening again they looked more comfortable and relaxed.

Table 5 .5 Mean Values of post-questionnaire variable: ‘Feelings when using songs while learning’

<i>Question – Post-questionnaires ‘How do you feel when you use songs while learning?’</i>	Frequency	Percent
more relaxed	64	37.6
more concentrated	17	10.0
remember easily what I learned	14	8.2
more pleasant learning	54	31.8
lesson seems easier	5	2.9
Confused	3	1.8
lesson seems harder	2	1.2
don't care	11	6.5
Total	170	100.0

Results from pre-questionnaires directed me ‘towards the most fruitful variables and associations to examine further’ (Sandelowski 2000:252), both qualitatively and quantitatively. Results from observations also directed me more precisely to the pupils I should further involve and the nature of information I wanted to obtain from them. The shy pupils in my sample prompted me to adopt focus groups as a research tool. These were organized in such a way as to elicit more detailed information concerning their thoughts and feelings, in a comfortable and non-threatening manner i.e. among their friends from class.

With respect to the difficulty of activities linked to songs in class, 54 pupils out of 170 shared a common belief that activities were enjoyable and made learning more pleasant. We should of course keep in mind that songs ‘as with any other materials, it is important to select carefully’ (Davanellos 1999:14) in order to help pupils retain their enthusiasm and confidence. The fact also that songs were presented within a familiar framework made

them feel more relaxed (64 out of 170) (see Table 5.5). *'As the activities were enjoyable, pupils were more willing to engage with them'*, as Panayiota claimed and added that, in her view, *'...when activities are enjoyable, we get excited, we like them, we don't think we have a lesson but it is something different for us. We enjoy the whole process and learn at the same time...'* The added interest was also evident throughout pupils' comments during focus groups where the following comments were made:

Anna - Class E: '... Even though some songs and relevant activities were a little bit difficult to follow as they appeared not to allow us to finish on time, this variety of material added to our enthusiasm, creating an enjoyable learning atmosphere and as a result giving us the opportunity to enjoy vocabulary and grammar learning...'

Mary – Class D': '... It is such fun... I like it ... the rhythms remind me of well known Greek lullabies ...'

John – Class St': '... for sure it is not boring ... it is exciting because these songs are songs we listen to in the afternoon and which are really cool...'

In the focus groups' responses to the question 'Do you believe that songs created a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom?' only one out of five pupils in the Class D focus group stated that he was hesitant at the beginning, for fear that he might not manage to complete the written assignment correctly. However, when he tried to do so, he realised that it was not that difficult after all. Another pupil from the six pupils in the Class St focus group made a comment on the negative feelings he had at first experienced, because he did not like English songs due to the fact that he could not understand the difficult words. But when he realised that he did not have to understand every single word, he started to enjoy it.

The analysis and production of codes and themes from the focus group transcripts provided an immensely rich and varied amount of data. Selected extracts follow which illustrate

affective factors (Table 5.6). Positive utterances included pupils' comments concerning their enjoyment while using songs; satisfaction about the learning of grammar in an easier way; and satisfaction or even excitement when students found they could do an activity which involved either grammar or vocabulary they had learned. However, there were some negative feelings caused by uncertainty, and some frustration which were evident in a number of utterances, as shown below:

Table 5.6 Focus groups analysis

<i>Margaret: 'I did find it difficult to follow that song, it was too fast...'</i>	Difficulty-fast tunes
<i>Tom: 'There was a lot of noise I think ... it was a bit annoying...'</i>	Difficulty –noise
<i>Tim: 'How cool ... it was fun ... it was something different...'</i>	Enjoyment
<i>Vanda: 'It helped me a lot I have to admit ... the lesson was not boring and grammar and vocabulary seemed easier to learn ... a bit like a ... party!'</i>	Enjoyment-acquiring grammar and vocabulary more easily

Some anxiety was also evident when working through the activities during lesson observations, and this was reinforced during the focus groups, as indicated below:

<i>"...I was so stressed... I thought that I wouldn't manage to finish on time..."</i>	Difficulty-anxiety
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Pupils' diaries and my personal journal also reinforced and supported the evidence that there was an increase in pupils' interest and enthusiasm. According to my personal journal, most of the pupils being observed were enthusiastic and interested during the lesson time and showed high motivation levels. Their answers for their written assignments at the end

of the assessment process were generally correct, and in their personal notes in their diaries they commented positively on their experience of using songs during their EFL lessons, referring to the relaxed atmosphere which made the lesson enjoyable.

One thing that was evident during the lesson observations was the confidence of the majority of the pupils and their engagement with learning. This reflects Arnold's view (1999a) that 'self-esteem, empathy or motivation, can greatly facilitate the language learning process' (Arnold 1999a:2). This confidence, which was evidenced both through the video transcripts and my personal observation notes, emerged after working with songs, although it should also be noted, however, that a small percentage of pupils mentioned the deterioration of their confidence because of the speed of the songs (Table 5.7). Frustration and pressure which was felt at first mainly by the very weak pupils as they listened to the songs and completed worksheets, seemed to be linked to the fast pace of some songs. In these cases the assignments appeared to push students to work faster in order to keep up with the song, which left them with a sense of uncertainty. This finding added to the data for research question 1, indicating high level of stress and anxiety generated by the speed of songs. This was largely addressed at an early stage by the use of headsets, so that every pupil could pause the song and complete the accompanying activities in her or his own time.

Table 5.7 Negative effects on learning grammar caused by rhythms being too fast to follow.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	60	35.1	35.1	35.1
	No	111	64.9	64.9	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

In order to get evidence for pupils' confidence I observed their behaviour and responses, looking for characteristics such as effort, persistence, attention and positive attitudes during the observed lessons and focus groups, aiming for triangulation through 'cross check results obtained from observation and recorded in field notes' (Sanday 1979:528). By studying all three different age groups, I was able to conclude that it was easier to keep younger pupils motivated and attracted by the use of songs, and more difficult to find suitable songs for older pupils which would offer them either new grammar or new vocabulary, but at the same time would attract their interest. Moreover, it was easier to observe and record younger pupils' enthusiasm through lesson observations since they were more expressive, in contrast to the older pupils who were more restrained. In light of the above, evidence of enthusiasm in the group of older pupils was more easily located through their focus groups than through the lesson observations. The most commonly given reason for not being lively and enthusiastic during the lesson time was not wanting to look babyish, for example:

Panos: 'I don't want to look like a baby ... you know ... I would feel so ... foolish! (smiling)... It was great though. We had such a nice time. Lively songs, interesting songs, songs we already know!...(shaking his head)'

The observed and videotaped lessons, one with the use of songs and one without the use of songs, (see Table 3.2 Lesson schedules) took place on consecutive weeks at the beginning of the spring term, followed by two focus groups from each class one group consisting of 5-6 weak pupils and one consisting of 5-6 able or gifted pupils. Findings from these observations revealed overall that pupils were a lot more motivated by the use of songs than during a normal lesson using their books but with no additional teaching material, and this enthusiasm was maintained throughout the period of listening to the different songs. When asked in the post-questionnaire how they felt when using the songs, 42 out of 170 pupils declared that they were enthusiastic, and 78 out of 170 pupils stated that they were happy. Participants were observed to be more involved, and I noted in particular their active participation and their willingness and positive attitude as shown by raising their hands and giving the answers, which replaced the usual passive response where pupils stay seated and repeat after me. Most of them remained more engaged and motivated throughout the session, offering their opinions and asking questions, than in 'normal' classes and appeared to gain in confidence. The high level of confidence shown by Yiannis for example, who remained engaged and motivated throughout the session, was particularly important since he was a really weak pupil and usually showed no interest in EFL lessons.

The findings clearly indicated the need for pupils to be constantly motivated in order to maximize their learning acquisition. As Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä suggest, there is 'a growing consensus that learning processes cannot be understood without taking emotional and motivational variables into account' (Gläser-Zikuda and Järvelä 2008:79). Through the focus groups pupils revealed that they became easily bored when using their textbooks, since they are quite old and do not include any interesting dialogues or attractive illustrations. They mostly require pupils to talk about actors or singers that are so old they

are unlikely to have even heard of them. It was clear that as an EFL teacher with 15 years experience, I needed to find something new for my pupils in order to attract their interest. It was, therefore, hoped, as Arnold states, that ‘supplementing the textbook with material that we feel is appropriate and interesting for our particular context’ (Arnold 1999b:274) would be a useful stimulus.

Findings from the questionnaires also indicated that pupils felt more stressed before the use of songs, both while learning grammar and while learning vocabulary. Related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks tests revealed a difference between the pre- and post-questionnaire question: ‘Are you stressed with new grammar?’, ($p=0.004<0.05$) and ‘Are you stressed with new vocabulary?’, ($p=0.013<0.05$).

The results from the questionnaires concerning the use of songs gave more evidence of positive results (see Table 5.8). Percentages of those who stated that learning grammar and vocabulary through the use of songs integrated into lessons was easier rose between the pre- and post-questionnaires ($p=0.003<0.05$).

Table 5.8 Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post-questionnaire variable: 'Feelings when using songs while learning'

Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 9	Pre-questionnaires 'How do you feel if you use songs while learning?' – Post-questionnaires 'How do you feel if you use songs while learning?'	.56805	2.46821	.18986	2.992	168	.003

9) Pre-questionnaire 'How do you feel when you use songs while learning?'	Frequency	Percent
more relaxed	46	27.1
more concentrated	12	7.1
remember easily what I learned	17	10.0
more pleasant learning	60	35.3
easier the lesson	9	5.3
Confused	5	2.9
makes lesson harder	5	2.9
don't care	16	9.4
Total	170	100.0

9) Post-questionnaire 'How do you feel when you use songs while learning?'	Frequency	Percent
more relaxed	64	37.6
more concentrated	17	10.0
remember easily what I learned	14	8.2
more pleasant learning	54	31.8
easier the lesson	5	2.9
Confused	3	1.8
makes lesson harder	2	1.2
don't care	11	6.5
Total	170	100.0

The use of authentic material in the form of songs accompanied by effective learning activities helped to 'create an atmosphere that encourages emotional well-being within a positive learning environment' (Adkins 1997:6), and provided a 'source of exceptional energy and excitement that almost always meets with success' (Milano 1994:1). Songs also

proved to be a great instrument for creating a sense of playfulness and joy in the classroom. Following Gardner's theory (1985) stated in Arnold (1999a) concerning musical intelligence, it was clear that through using pupils' musical intelligence I could help them learn grammar and vocabulary more effectively, which reinforces Weaver's point that 'the function of music becomes that of a teaching tool, similar to audiovisual material or computer software' (Weaver 1993:97).

It was not only the very able pupils who appeared to benefit, but also those who tended to have lower achievement levels and poor results in tests. Although in some cases they were reluctant to participate, they gradually became involved, as can be seen from my observations of Althea and Rafael. Althea is a shy girl. Observing her carefully during the lesson time I was able to see from her reactions and expressions her willingness to participate in the dialogue during the lesson. She looked enthusiastic; she raised her hand and wanted to talk. She wanted to say the colour she found after listening to the song and appeared very happy and confident. Rafael is also a weak pupil, and has difficulty understanding many words in English, which, according to his interview transcript, is due to fact that he does not have English afternoon private lessons. Observing him during the lesson time was a very positive experience; I was able to note the effort he put in and watch him complete his assignment, something he is not often able to do due to the disappointment he feels after repeated failures to understand.

Figure 5.1 Video transcript from lesson observation (with new vocabulary highlighted)

SSS: Mrs Maria it's a little bit fast and we don't have enough time to write the words down.	problems
T: Don't worry we are going to listen to it again. (listening to the song again) So ... did you hear the colour of the fox? What colour is the fox?	
S: Brown... The fox is brown .	new
T: And what colour are its socks? Rafael?	vocabulary
Rafael: Yellow ...	new
T: Yes its socks are yellow.	vocabulary
T: And what colour did you draw the apple?	new
Athina: The apple is red . I drew the apple red.	vocabulary

The positive results from observations were confirmed by the focus groups. Pupils were selected for these focus groups according to their level of English competence and their interest in English lessons, in order to supply sufficient evidence of change after the use of songs and indicate whether they had indeed become more engaged and acquired new grammar and vocabulary. As pupils participated and were audio recorded in groups, I had to counter possible criticisms about potential influence by their peers. For this reason I constituted the groups with pupils of about the same level of achievement. Pupils of lower ability were put into separate groups from pupils of higher ability in order for them not to be adversely influenced, and to avoid the possibility that they might be laughed at. I also tried to convince them, as mentioned earlier, that there were no right or wrong answers. It was important to get their honest answers and not answers given just to please me. I considered that their views would add to the data gathered from observation, either because they showed no interest (as opposed to the enthusiasm shown by the majority of pupils) and would, therefore, provide a balance, or because they showed great improvement when using songs in their English class.

Even though pupils' responses during focus groups at times tended to be short, I encouraged them to talk more, allowing them to express themselves as fully as possible. Most of the pupils displayed a strong degree of motivation at the classroom level through their willingness to use songs as part of their learning, evidence that songs did 'serve to raise everyone's energy and enjoyment levels' (Moskowitz 1999:189). Most of the participants mentioned how songs increased their creativity and how they helped them develop their imagination; how much they enjoyed the experience, and how motivating they found learning English through songs, as the example shows:

'... I am sure that if I was asked to complete a regular assignment from our textbook (smiling), I would not have completed it in such a positive way. It was fun and we were feeling something like ... as if we were playing ... as if we were having fun with our friends... it reminded me of something like a party...'

After each observed and videotaped lesson, pupils completed their personal diaries, noting down how they felt about their learning experience. As it was not easy to gather information from all pupils' diaries, I chose randomly from all different level pupils' comments. This helped me to make decisions on the kind of questions to use in focus groups in order to achieve triangulation of the results. Timotheos noted the change that occurred in his attitude to learning with songs:

'... I was frustrated at the beginning but when I got used to the tune it was not that hard for me to complete the related assignments...'

Another pupil, Antonis who was a very good pupil added:

'... it was about time I worked on something that was not boring and that would be really exciting and interesting ...'

Whereas Andreas noted that,

'... I like songs but it wasn't that easy for me to follow. Also there were some difficult words I couldn't understand...'

The initial study revealed that in the class being studied, there was a boy with considerable learning problems who usually refused to cooperate and did whatever he wanted to. There was another boy who stood out in class, a gifted pupil who usually showed no interest in taking part in the learning activities since he felt that everything was too easy for him. Of significant note was the fact that both boys' behaviour changed after the use of songs in the lesson. Both showed great interest and took part in all activities organized around song. Observing them during the lesson I could see they were being challenged and motivated by having different learning material and on being asked at the focus group, they mentioned that,

Strong Pupil: 'I was bored in the regular classroom. I needed something more challenging a task that would keep me more engaged'

Weak Pupil: 'I felt that no teacher could meet my needs. I don't know English. It is hard for me to follow the rest of the kids. Songs... I love them. May be there were words I didn't understand, but I could do finally something, work on a task that even if it wasn't completely easy for me, it was interesting and fun.'

The biggest challenge in the initial study was four boys with considerable disciplinary or learning problems. They were interested in everything except what was happening in the class and rarely made any effort to accomplish anything during the lesson. One of them was a gifted pupil, always winning first and second prices at competitions. Unfortunately English was considered very easy for him, since he had been taking English Language private lessons for years and the curriculum we were following was way below his competence level.

As a result, in my main study in order to deal with uncooperative pupils, weak or gifted ones, I tried to effectively utilize classroom differentiation. I had small groups which could follow a variety of different learning activities, taking account of pupils' individual learning needs. Noise level and control were issues I had to deal with. I found that pair-work was one way of avoiding such problems. It could be said that this was actually 'positive noise', the sound of liveliness, which was caused by their enthusiasm while working. However, some pupils found it distracting. This was something I needed to explore more in the main study. In particular I needed to observe more carefully both gifted and low achievement pupils to see their reactions in order to find out if songs did have the power to engage all pupils in ways that other teaching methods might not.

Going through my main study I knew that I would have to deal with one disadvantage of using songs in the classroom, and that was the need to restrict pupils' talk and stop them creating unwanted disturbance. At times I found it difficult to control the noise and constant chatter which disrupted both my pupils' concentration and my ability to obtain good responses from them. This caused problems, although I was aware that this noise was actually the sound of liveliness, which, as Arnold states 'served to raise everyone's energy and enjoyment levels' (Arnold 1999b:189). The biggest challenge was pupils, mainly boys, with considerable disciplinary or learning problems. They were interested in everything except what was happening in the class and rarely made any effort to accomplish anything during the lesson. They refused to follow what the other pupils were doing. This was evident through my observations of the lessons where I found at least one such a pupil, Rafael, who mentioned during focus group discussion,

'...I can't follow the other kids... it is really hard for me ...I don't like English ...Can we just play games on the computers or listen to our favourite songs?...'

Another challenge was to keep gifted pupils motivated to participate, since they got bored easily, finding the lessons far too easy. According to Andreas a gifted child:

‘... It is so easy for me, I get bored ... I want to do something different ... I love using the computers ... I love listening to songs! ...’

Having though studied the results of the initial study I realised that by creating a supportive learning environment and effectively intervening in the learning process, the intrinsic motivation of young foreign language learners could be stimulated from the beginning. In order to effectively utilize classroom differentiation in my main study I organised the classes into small groups with each group following a variety of different learning activities, taking account of pupils’ individual learning needs. In this way, all pupils were able to work effectively and feel confident in accomplishing their assignments. Figure 5.2 below from my observation data is evidence of high levels of engagement and enthusiasm:

Figure 5.2 Video transcript from lesson observation (with negative feelings highlighted)

Participants		Notes on pupils reactions and behaviour
T.	<p><i>(The conversation continues...)</i></p> <p><i>Very good. Ok... now let's relax a little bit ... Let's listen to what Super and Duper usually do. Listen and sing along. (They listen to the song from the CD)</i></p> <p><i>Try to sing along... Ok ... Does Duper clean the car? ...Aloe?</i></p>	<p><i>They start saying YES!</i></p> <p><i>Some have neither a positive nor negative reaction</i></p> <p><i>A couple are negative saying in Greek that they are bored</i></p>
Aloe:	<i>No ... he doesn't.</i>	<i>After the song begins, even the ones who said that they were bored, change their reaction and start clapping their hands. This applies to even pupils who are not very good at English.</i>
T:	<p><i>Yes ... he never cleans the car ...</i></p> <p><i>Now what does Super usually do on Thursdays? Elea?</i></p>	
Elea:	<i>Super usually goes to the gym.</i>	

Andreas was an overactive boy in a fifth-grade class. He could not be quiet for long. He liked disturbing everyone in the class and, because he did not feel capable of taking part in the classroom activities, he kept making disturbing noises just to gain the others' attention. Many times we talked with his parents but they kept saying that he was just as unruly at home and that they had tried many ways of solving the problem, even taking him to a psychologist, and had finally given up trying to control him since nothing seemed to be working. After using songs in the English class there was an amazing turnaround. He finally stopped making a noise and even picked up his pencil and tried to complete his assignment, even if he did not manage much of it. He was trying to whisper the song, even

though his English was poor, and when later on he was asked during the focus group if he liked using songs and if he thought that songs could help him learn English he said:

Andreas: 'I couldn't believe it! I could do something the other kids could. You know I thought that I could do nothing and finally ... I know I didn't do much ... do you believe that I can do better?'

Teacher: 'I certainly do. Do you want to continue using songs during the lesson?'

Andreas: 'Certainly. Can I bring some of my own CDs. You know my favourite singer is Michael Jackson.'

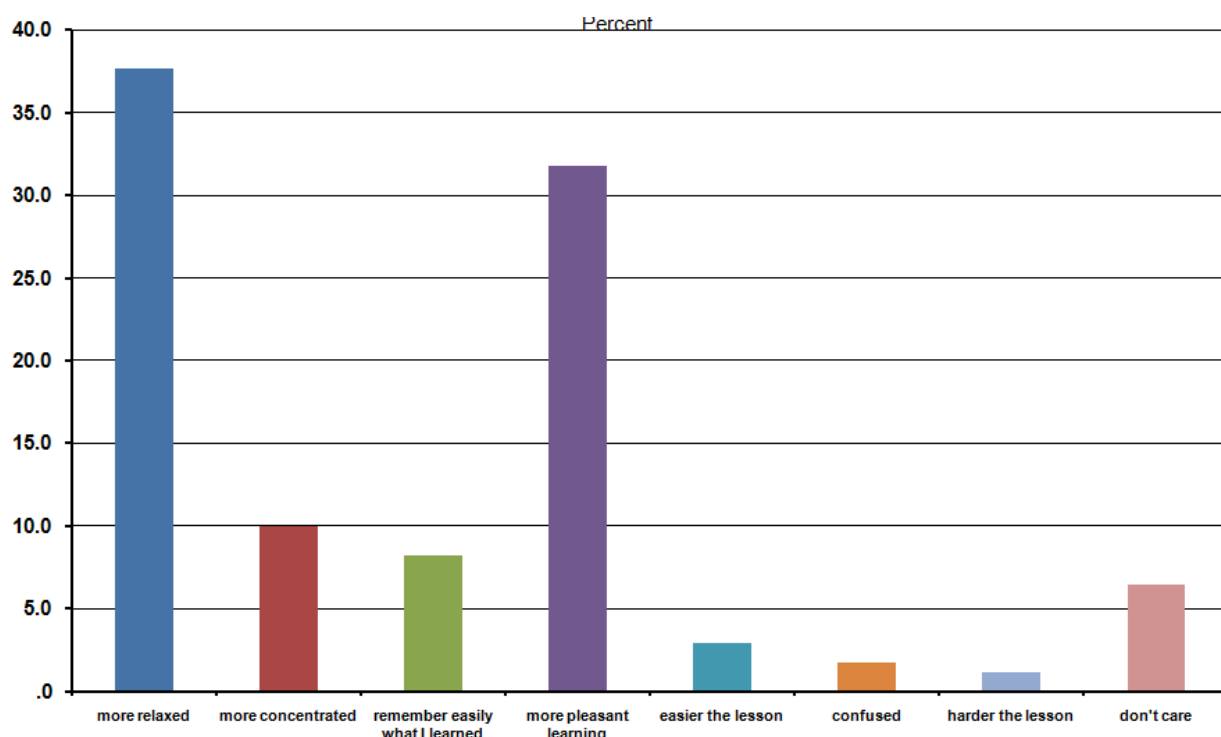
The key to success with Andreas was the fact that he knew most of Michael Jackson's songs. This was completely unexpected: a boy who apparently knew virtually no English, knew every word of the songs and was actually singing many difficult words, and stating by the end of the lesson that he was no longer bored, since he could do something interesting in the classroom. Moreover, he was imitating the correct pronunciation of the English words. It was evident that the songs, and more specifically the rhythm of the songs, were helping him to memorize the words and structures and had a very positive effect on his learning, supporting Arnold and Fonseca's claim that 'not only does this variety of presentation allow students to learn in their own best ways, it also helps to reduce boredom as language learning requires frequent circling back over the same material, if learning is to be sustained' (Arnold and Fonseca 2004:125).

Findings for research question 1 included evidence which supported the notion that most of the pupils can benefit from the use of songs during their EFL lesson time. Results demonstrated clearly that if teachers want to capture pupils' interest and help them learn grammar and vocabulary in a more enjoyable way, they could consider implementing songs accompanied by a variety of different interesting activities into their EFL lessons, in order to increase their pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for language learning.

Participants appeared to be more willing to get actively involved in relevant activities, gaining considerable enjoyment from them, and at the same time extending their grammar and vocabulary.

There were instances where pupils appeared not to have enjoyed the experience, and far preferred the more traditional way of learning, displaying particularly high levels of frustration and disappointment since they could not follow the rest of the pupils and had difficulty understanding the more advanced vocabulary. There were other times where songs seemed to de-motivate some pupils. Those affected appeared to be less able to participate in the learning process; but those cases were few. From Figure 5.2 it is obvious that although the positive effects of the use of songs are considerable, such as helping them to relax, to have a more pleasant experience of learning, to remember more easily what they have learned and to concentrate better, we should not ignore even the small percentage of the pupils who claimed to be confused (1.8 %) [3 pupils out of 170] or found the lesson harder to follow (1.2 %) [2 pupils out of 170] most probably due to the fast rhythm, the unknown words or maybe the noise which was created as they mentioned during the focus group discussions.

Figure 5.3 Mean Values of post-questionnaire variable: 'Feelings when you use songs while learning'



Findings for Research Question 2:

Can the use of songs in the EFL classroom reinforce the grammatical structures being taught?

My second research question was designed to trace any possible changes in the acquisition of new grammar structures. Observation gave evidence of the improvement that using songs as part of language lessons can make, by providing pupils with an enjoyable context, which makes it easier for them to understand grammatical structures. Even students of low ability managed to learn something, and this was evident from the video transcripts analysed and compared with other data. Figure 5.4 which revealed positive emotions is re-presented below. Further analysis of the transcript revealed evidence of new grammar learning, as highlighted below:

Figure 5.4 Video transcript from lesson observation (with new grammar highlighted)

T:	Very good. Ok... now let's relax a little bit ... Let's listen to what Super and Duper usually do. Listen and sing along. (They listen to the song trying to complete the missing verbs using the Present Simple tense)	
T:	Try to sing along... Ok ... Does Duper clean the car? ... Aloe?	
Aloe:	No ... he doesn't .	new grammar
T:	Yes ... he never cleans the car ... Now what does Super usually do on Thursdays? Elea?	new grammar
Elea:	Super usually goes to the gym. (The conversation continues...) OK. Let's sing it again.	new grammar

Further detailed analysis of these lesson observations and the tally-based scheduled revealed that pupils were more willing to participate with responses and further questions, evidence that they liked learning new grammar through songs. This was reinforced from related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks tests which revealed differences between the pre- and post-questionnaire question 'Do you like learning new grammar?' ($p=0.023<0,05$), and was further supported by data from the interviews and questionnaires where pupils stated that they felt less stressed if they used songs to learn grammar ($p=0.004<0.05$).

Raffia: who was carefully observed throughout the lesson since he was a pupil with many learning difficulties, and did not attend afternoon English lessons, stated that:

“... having no private English afternoon lessons, makes me feel as I don't know anything compared to the others in my class. But these songs ... I know them, I sing them in the afternoon. There were a lot of words I didn't know the meaning of. Well, I didn't have to know everything and now I know many new words ...and I never imagined that I could learn the simple past tense through a song. It was fun!...”

5th grade focus group with 10-11 year olds

During the focus groups, pupils were encouraged to speak about the ways in which they had improved their productive and receptive language skills and developed their range of expression, and to comment on the grammatical structures being used. Extracts from lesson transcripts (Figure 5.2) illustrate how participants were particularly focused on the new grammatical structures. Songs offered a wide range of opportunities (Appendix C) to practise the new grammar, and comments during focus groups indicated the extent to which they also made it easier for pupils to understand new grammar. The variety of activities and their enthusiasm for the language was evident during lesson observations, backed up by the results from the questionnaire analysis (Table 5.9).

Table 5.9 Descriptive Statistics of Pre- and Post- questionnaire question: ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’

<i>Like learning Grammar</i>	<i>Pre-questionnaire</i>		<i>Post-questionnaire</i>	
	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Always</i>	69	40.4	89	52.0
<i>Usually</i>	37	21.6	37	21.6
<i>Sometimes</i>	32	18.7	21	12.3
<i>Rarely</i>	15	8.8	12	7.0
<i>Never</i>	18	10.5	12	7.0
<i>Total</i>	171	100.0	171	100.0

Furthermore, values of the variable ‘easy to learn grammar’ (Table 5.10) were not normally distributed ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$ for boys and girls, respectively). The Mann-Whitney test revealed that the effect of gender on ‘stressed when learning grammar’ was not significant ($p = 0.905 > 0.05$).

Table 5.10 Descriptive statistics of the variable: ‘Easy to learn new grammar’ relative to gender.

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Pre-questionnaire ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’	Boy	86	2.326	1.376	0.148	1	5
	Girl	85	2.224	1.331	0.144	1	5
	Total	171	2.275	1.351	0.103	1	5

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Post-questionnaire ‘Do you like learning new grammar?’	Boy	86	2.000	1.311	0.141	1	5
	Girl	85	1.906	1.191	0.129	1	5
	Total	171	1.953	1.250	0.096	1	5

Moreover, values of the variable ‘easy to learn new grammar’ were not normally distributed, ($p = 0.000$, $p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$, for classes D, E, and St, respectively) (Table 4.11). The Levene test showed that there was no homogeneity of variance, (p

$=0.000 > 0.05$), and the Kruskal-Wallis test indicated that the effect of age on 'easy to learn new grammar' was not significant ($p = 0.254 > 0.05$).

Table 5.11 Descriptive statistics of 'Easy to learn new grammar' relative to class

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
ClassD	59	2.339	1.198	0.156	1	5
ClassE	44	2.068	0.759	0.114	1	4
ClassSt	68	1.956	0.781	0.095	1	4
Total	171	2.117	0.951	0.073	1	5

It appeared through studying the results of the values of variable 'Stressed to learn new grammar' that these were not normally distributed, ($p = 0.000$, $p = 0.000$ και $p = 0.000$, for class D, class E, and class St, respectively). Moreover, from the Levene test we found homogeneity of variance ($p = 0.096 > 0.05$). From the ANOVA test we found that the effect of class to 'Stressed to learn new grammar' was significant, ($F(2, 168) = 5.011$ and $p = 0.008 < 0.05$). Moreover, from a Tukey Post-Hoc Analysis we found that the mean value of 'Stressed to learn new grammar' for class D was slightly less than the mean value of class E ($p = 0.007$) and the mean value of 'Stressed to learn new grammar' for class D was less than the mean value of class St ($p = 0.074$). Note that from the Kruskal-Wallis test we found that the effect of class to 'Stressed to learn new grammar' was significant ($p = 0.001 < 0.05$). Moreover, the mean value of 'Stressed to learn new grammar' for class D was less than the mean value for that of class E and of class St, because the adjusted significance was 0.001 and 0.007 respectively.

Overall, it appeared from lesson observations that most of the groups took an active approach in listening to the songs and completing their assignments. This could be seen from the different strategies they employed to develop their new grammar. Only a small percentage (14.6%) stated in the open-ended questionnaire given out at the end of the study

just before the focus groups discussions, that it was hard for them to complete the grammar activities due to the difficult language they found in the songs (Table 5.12), allowing me to conclude that for the majority of pupils this was not the case.

Table 5.12 Open-ended Questionnaire - Negative Effects on learning new grammar due to difficult language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	25	14.6	14.6	14.6
	No	145	84.8	84.8	99.4
	22.00	1	.6	.6	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

Nevertheless, there were some participants who identified problems while completing their grammar assignments due to lack of confidence, as was evident from the focus group discussions.

Fotis: I was feeling ... I was feeling ... maybe frightened! (looking as if he is ashamed to say so)

Teacher: Why ... what was it that made you feel this way...

Petros: You know Mrs Maria ... It was really strange ... On the one hand I was feeling something like Fotis, but on the other, songs made me enjoy the lesson more.

Teacher: Do you listen to songs at home too? Did you like the songs being used?

Petros: Yes ... I listen to songs all the time ... but ... it's different if you use them during the lesson for specific purposes. I mean if there is something you don't understand ... you won't be able to complete your assignment.

Teacher: Fotis ... do you believe that the assignments were difficult to complete?

Fotis: No... I wouldn't say difficult... (hesitating) ... well OK ... maybe some words were difficult but I didn't have to understand all words. This 'strange' feeling started changing after starting to complete the assignment...

Petros: ... and mostly after you explained to us the first examples... I think that it was just a matter of time.

These pupils needed constant support from me, and more detailed directions and explanations to give them the confidence and willingness to move on. The disruptive noise and unwanted talk disturbed a small percentage (7.6%), of the pupils (Table 5.13) as they revealed during focus groups. These were pupils who wanted to concentrate more on the song in order to complete the related activity. As mentioned earlier, this issue was largely resolved through the use of individual headsets, which helped them concentrate. Observing them while working I wrote down in my personal journal,

Unit 12 (The busy witch) Date: 25th of January 2011

“... Iasonas and Restis are two boys always disturbing the others and trying to attract my attention doing annoying things. They are now using their headsets quietly trying to listen to the song and complete their assignment. What I notice is the fact that they get absorbed by listening to the song and at some points they forget that they have an accompanying assignment to complete. They have to be persuaded to move on with writing...”

Table 5.13 Open-ended Questionnaires - Negative Effects on learning new grammar due to disturbing noise

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	13	7.6	7.6	7.6
	No	158	92.4	92.4	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

An analysis of the questionnaires indicated the extent to which pupils completed their new grammar assignments. Pupils' responses in the questionnaires confirmed that using songs did not cause much difficulty even though some pupils indicated a low level of stress and

anxiety. A comparison of the questionnaires before and after using songs through frequency tables, indicated that songs made it easier for pupils to learn new grammar ($p=0.029<0.05$), and helped them memorize grammar structures. 25.3% in the pre-questionnaire strongly agreed with this statement, and this figure increased to 36.5% in the post-questionnaire. This contrasts with the figures for those who strongly disagreed: 20% (pre-questionnaire) and only 5% (post-questionnaire) (Table 5.14). Related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks test revealed a significant difference ($p=0.001<0.05$) between the pre-questionnaire and post-questionnaire for the question: ‘Does memorizing through the use of songs make learning new grammar easier?’

Table 5.14 Pre- and Post-Questionnaires question: ‘Does memorizing the rules of grammar through songs help you to learn grammatical structures more easily?’

Does memorizing the rules of grammar through songs help you to learn grammatical structures more easily?	Pre Questionnaires		Post Questionnaires	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	43	25.3	62	36.5
Agree	39	22.9	39	22.9
Neither agree or disagree	42	24.7	47	27.6
Disagree	12	7.1	13	7.6
Strongly disagree	34	20.0	9	5.3
Total	170	100.0	170	100.0

Songs seemed to be a way of making the process of learning certain grammar structures more enjoyable, but results from the focus group discussions showed that there were quite a few pupils who, after using songs, stated that learning grammar in this way was not easier than through other more traditional methods. Further data from the analysis of the pre- and post-questionnaires, however, revealed that songs did help pupils memorise grammatical structures, supporting Arnold and Fonseca’s conclusions that ‘language

learning can be supported by bringing in the musical, visual-spatial, bodily-kinaesthetic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, mathematical and naturalistic abilities as they constitute distinct frames for working on the same linguistic content' (Arnold and Fonseca 2004: 125) and as a result making learning grammar a lot easier (Table 5.15).

Table 5.15 Descriptive Statistics of pre-and post-questionnaire question: 'Does the use of songs makes learning new grammar easier?'

Does the use of songs make learning new grammar easier?	Pre-Questionnaires		Post-Questionnaires	
	Frequency/ number of pupils	Percent	Frequency/ number of pupils	Percent
Strongly agree	85	49.7	57	33.5
Agree	32	18.7	47	27.6
Neither agree or disagree	35	20.5	44	25.9
Disagree	9	5.3	12	7.1
Strongly disagree	10	5.8	10	5.9
Total	171	100.0	170	100.0

From related samples Wilcoxon signed ranks test we see that there were differences between the pre- and post-questionnaire question 'Does the use of songs makes learning new grammar easier?' ($p=0.029<0.05$).

Keeping also in mind the fact that pupils' textbooks are more grammar oriented and that pupils need some explicit discussion of the new grammatical structure in order to 'organize and focus the input enough to permit acquisition'(Garrett 1986:134), songs with accompanying activities were an exposure to something new which also offered appropriate input with the potential to make pupils more 'psychologically receptive' (Garrett 1986:134). It was obvious through the analysis of this study's results that the use of songs offered a unique EFL teaching approach, and songs became a very useful teaching tool which helped pupils learn grammar in an interesting way proving 'the potential value of popular music as a pedagogical tool' (Hamblin 1987:479). Songs became a teaching

tool that ‘provided meaningful, spaced repetition of the learning items’ (Richards 1969:161) without losing the learners’ interest, something that unfortunately has not been the case in Cypriot state schools for some time. Through repetition, the grammar structures became deeply internalized after practice both orally and in an amusing written way, through the use of carefully created teaching worksheets. This entertaining opportunity, being undeniably pupil centred, helped pupils to acquire new grammar structures through cooperation (pair work) in the classroom.

Findings for Research Question 3:

Can songs create opportunities for EFL learners to develop their vocabulary acquisition?

The third research question addressed in my study was whether songs could affect pupils’ acquisition and retention of new vocabulary. The increased motivation among pupils which led to a better understanding of new grammatical structures when songs were used in the classroom appeared also to be linked, most of the time positively, with the recall of new vocabulary. This was evident from watching the pupils at break-time singing the songs or even murmuring words or whole sentences, indicating strongly that the use of songs did contribute positively to the durability of memory and to the effectiveness of vocabulary learning. The lack of interest due to the outdated textbooks was preventing them from showing any interest in learning the taught vocabulary, whereas using songs, by contrast, could ‘seem less monotonous because of the rhythm and melody’ (Millington 2011:135), maximizing their interest and the benefits they could have in vocabulary learning (see Table 5.16). As a result, songs showed themselves clearly, especially through lesson observations, to be a great opportunity for vocabulary practice, and when based on a specific theme or topic could ‘provide the context for vocabulary learning’ (Millington 2011:135).

In the following dialogue (Figure 5.4), it is noticeable that most of the pupils are actively involved in the lesson, making comments and answering my questions using the new vocabulary. Through constant revision and clarification I attempted to ensure that the whole class understood the new vocabulary that was being explored in the lesson. In the following dialogue in one of the lessons I am testing the pupils' understanding by asking questions in order to find out if they all found the missing words in their written assignment. The transcripts of the video recordings of lessons were analysed closely to see if pupils were involved in discussion of the new vocabulary items. These recordings showed that in the learning of vocabulary in particular, words that were mentioned, repeated, focused upon, or at the centre of the interaction between teacher and pupils or among pupils were recalled and retained, which suggests strongly that vocabulary learning can be enhanced by the use of songs a fact that Marin (2009) had stated through her study with 4-to-5-year-old-children confirming that 'children with musical training showed enhanced language abilities, particularly in morphologic rule formation and memory for words' (Marin 2009:187).

Figure 5.4 Video transcript from lesson observation

	<p><i>In order to introduce them to the new lesson of the day I tell them to listen to a song so as to find out what we are going to talk about in the lesson that day.</i></p> <p>...</p>	<p><i>The song makes them feel really enthusiastic</i></p> <p>Motivation</p>
T.	<p><i>Let's start with the basics... This is the big hand ... it gives us the minutes. And this is the little hand ... it gives us the hour... The green part on the right is the past. The red area ... the other half of the clock is the to area ... (explaining in Greek) So if the big hand is on twelve we say it is ... o'clock. So have a look and tell me 'What's the time now?'</i></p>	
Andreas:	<p><i>It's three o'clock.</i></p>	<p>new vocabulary</p>
T:	<p><i>Yes... very good... What about now? Elea?</i></p>	<p>new vocabulary</p>
Elea:	<p><i>It's eight o'clock...</i></p>	
T:	<p><i>Good ... what's the time now ...Nikos...</i></p>	<p>new vocabulary</p>
Nikos:	<p><i>It's nine o'clock.</i></p> <p><i>(The conversation continues until the teacher explains everything about telling the time, all new vocabulary: half past/quarter past/ quarter to etc)</i></p> <p>...</p>	

It is also noteworthy that some of the pupils who were in the lessons which were observed and videotaped and were later chosen to take part in focus groups were tested through different questions on the retention of vocabulary. These findings revealed that the new vocabulary was recalled even by pupils of lower achievement.

Teacher: Did you like the song you used for learning the colours?

Savvina: Yes, it was nice...but I think that Michales over here was a little bit confused about how he should colour the fox's socks.

Michales: No... I wasn't.

Savvina: Yes you were... Yes you were... Didn't you colour the socks black!!! (Laughing)

Teacher: Well...It's OK! We all make mistakes. But Michales over here knows the colours very well, I think! Michales ... can you tell us what colour your socks are!

Michales: White of course. (Knowing very well what the colour was)

Through carefully studying both the video transcripts and the focus group transcripts, I managed to identify new vocabulary which was recalled by my pupils. I highlighted in green any new words that were learned, and wrote them down in a new column noting down that this was new vocabulary. The new words remembered by most of the pupils were nearly as many as they were taught, for example the lesson about colours or the about telling the time. The words they recalled had arisen during the lesson, although this depended on how easy the vocabulary was (e.g. colours were easier than telling the time). The easier the vocabulary, the more pupils remembered it, as can be seen in the tally-based observation schedule in Table 5.16.

Table 5.16 Tally-based observation schedule – new vocabulary being learned

Class D1- Learning the colours	red	White	Black	Orange	Blue	Yellow	Brown	purple	Green	pink	Grey
Pupil of lower achievement (times observed during video transcriptions recalling colours)	√ 	√ 	√ 		√ 				√ 		
Pupil of higher achievement(times observed during video transcriptions recalling colours)	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√ 	√

In the observed and videotaped lessons, many of the pupils took whatever opportunities were available to express themselves in English, and enthusiastically repeated the English words and phrases they had learned from the songs. This indicated the extent to which new vocabulary was being practised naturally and becoming more ‘deeply internalized’ (Metin and Saricoban 2000:3) through repetition, leading to increased levels of confidence. Pupils had the confidence to try out the new vocabulary learned in a range of activities, which allowed even those of lower ability to feel happy and not stressed while working. As could be seen from the responses from pre- and post- questionnaires, most of the pupils added that they liked learning vocabulary through songs ($p=0.022>0.05$) (Table 5.17). 42% and 30% of them noted that they felt happy and enthusiastic while working with songs.

Table 5.17 Post-questionnaire variable: 'Feelings while learning new vocabulary'

Post-Questionnaire variable 'Feelings while learning new vocabulary'	Frequency	Percent
Enthusiastic	51	30.0
Happy	72	42.4
Stressed	2	1.2
Nervous	4	2.4
Worried	4	2.4
Confused	10	5.9
Bored	27	15.9
Angry	0	.0
Total	170	100.0

Songs were an alternative and motivating means of promoting second language acquisition and therefore proved 'to be a better means of capturing the attention of children who show little interest' (Medina 1990:12). This study offered even pupils who usually showed no interest in the lesson, educational opportunities that they would not have had in a normal every-day lesson. The pupils of the fifth-grade class (10-11) were given the opportunity to write their own story which was later set to music and recorded in a studio. The idea started from the written assignment which they had to complete using the simple present tense and the days of the week. They decided to draw accompanying pictures and finally put the sentences together. The final version sounded like a poem which ended up as their own song. From their comments during focus groups it was clear how exciting the whole process had been and how much they had learned through this enjoyable experience.

Taking into consideration that the ability to memorise is of central importance to the understanding of the language learning process, it appeared that there was a significant decrease in the percentage of pupils who responded that they strongly disagreed with the question in the post-questionnaire '*Does memorizing through songs makes learning new vocabulary easier?*' from 19% to 8% (see Table 5.18), indicating that pupils realised that the use of songs was helping them to learn vocabulary. Despite the differing opinions which were revealed through the observations and the focus groups, the post-questionnaire

indicated that the majority of students felt that songs helped them learn and memorise new vocabulary more easily ($p=0.021<0.05$). At the same time, the percentage of pupils who disagreed with the use of songs decreased from 19% to 8%, and who strongly agreed increased from 30% to 36 %.

Table 5.18 Descriptive statistics of pre- and post-questionnaire question: 'Does memorizing through songs make learning new vocabulary easier?'

	Pre-questionnaire		Post-questionnaire	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	50	29.4	61	35.9
Agree	39	22.9	37	21.8
Neither agree or disagree	39	22.9	45	26.5
Disagree	10	5.9	14	8.2
Strongly disagree	32	18.8	13	7.6
Total	170	100.0	170	100.0

Paired Samples Test							
		Paired Differences			T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean			
Pair 16	Pre-Questionnaire Memorizing easier to learn new vocabulary – Post-Questionnaire Memorizing easier to learn new vocabulary	.32544	1.72015	.13232	2.460	168	.015

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 16	Pre- Questionnaire Memorizing easier to learn new vocabulary	2.627	169	1.442	0.111

	Post- Questionnaire Memorizing easier to learn new vocabulary	2.302	169	1.253	0.096
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The use of songs in the foreign language classroom and the positive climate it created helped pupils, as they also later on stated during focus groups, to recall specific words and phrases which they had learned in songs. Marlene from the sixth grade (11-12 year olds) who had been taking English private lessons for four years, when asked to elaborate on what she had learned through songs and how she felt about using them during lesson time, gave the following response:

*“... songs were a very **useful tool** for learning English, a tool that made learning **more enjoyable** and helped me **overcome the short attention problems** I had, enabling me to **concentrate** for longer periods. They proved to be a very useful resource for creating **interesting** practice opportunities, making me feel **no pressure** while learning, captivating my interest, ending up in learning through enthusiasm...”*

6th grade (aged 11-12) focus group.

Table 5.19 Open-questionnaires - Negative Effects on learning new vocabulary due to the fact that songs were too fast to follow

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	52	30.4	30.4	30.4
	No	119	69.6	69.6	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

Although for some of the students, problems were related to the fast pace of the songs, for a few others (16.4%) it was due to the difficult vocabulary being used in the songs (Table 5.20), reflecting Weaver's opinion that 'pop songs may present problems for the teacher because of the uncontrolled vocabulary, colloquialisms and slang, and more advanced grammatical structures' (Weaver 1993:101).

Table 5.20 (Open-questionnaires) - Negative Effects on learning vocabulary due to the fact that songs had difficult language

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	16.4	16.4	16.4
	No	143	83.6	83.6	100.0
	Total	171	100.0	100.0	

An analysis of Michales comments from his focus group transcript revealed that:

"...Songs were not that hard to follow. Having a chance to pause and listen again to difficult parts of the songs, enabled me to learn vocabulary in a fun way and complete the related activities in a way that wouldn't make me feel bored at all..."

This issue was also raised by Pavlos who added that,

"...Through these activities I learned new vocabulary by the end of the lesson, without putting in that much effort and it was fun..."

Other students claimed that there could be different types of problems depending on the degree of difficulty. Anna shared her personal experience regarding the problems she faced while completing the different assignments:

“...I like songs, but I don’t think that I am as good at English as my friends in my class so sometimes I was afraid that I wouldn’t manage to follow the rest of my class. Just feeling that you (teacher) were nearby and you could just give me a hint to help me move on was enough, but to be honest things were not always that easy! ...”

Contrary to the positive comments of most pupils, there were five pupils who talked about the negative feelings they experienced when they could not complete their assignments because they could not understand the words of the songs. Despite the fact that these five pupils argued that the words were hard to follow, they made explicit references to the association between the fun they were having and how much they were enjoying the experience. Two pupils as they mentioned in the post-questionnaire variable strongly agreed that they were ‘Stressed with new vocabulary’ and 4 pupils stated that they agreed. In further discussion about the reason for this stress during the focus group discussions, they explained that it was due to the fast rhythm which they could not follow and as a result they became very stressed and finally disappointed about not completing their written assignment, although the use of headsets helped them to a great extent since they had the chance to listen again to the song if they wished to.

Table 5.21 (Post-questionnaires) – Stressed by new vocabulary

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	Minimum	Maximum
Stressed by new vocabulary	Boy	85	4.447	0.880	0.095	1	5
	Girl	85	4.482	0.854	0.093	1	5
	Total	170	4.465	0.864	0.066	1	5

Stressed by new vocabulary	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	2	1.2
Agree	4	2.4

Neither agree or disagree	18	10.6
Disagree	35	20.6
Strongly disagree	111	65.3
Total	170	100.0

When pupils were asked during the open-ended questionnaires whether the language being used was difficult and whether this made it difficult for them to follow, just 28 out of 171 gave a positive answer. When further asked if unknown words created anxiety, 10 of the pupils responded in the affirmative. They claimed to feel nervous when they were given the assignments to complete. However, the extent to which anxiety was expressed varied from person to person. As Basilis said ‘... I get a little bit anxious’ ... and for Liza anxiety was created when ‘...I felt the time pressure...’. However, Margareta saw the use of songs as a necessity and made a particular reference to the state textbooks she had been using over the last three years in school (she is a sixth grade pupil aged 12) which she finds really boring, and not conducive to motivation. She also referred to the fact that songs helped her without any effort to memorize whole sentences and also new words which she could use later on, even outside in the playground during break-time, singing them to the same tune.

Through focus groups I managed to elicit participants’ own descriptions and interpretations of events and behaviours. I tried to be clear by focusing on specific details like in the following focus group example with pupils from a sixth grade classroom,

Teacher: Did you like using songs?

Pupil 1: I think it was good. (silence) ... Eee... a little difficult sometimes...

Pupil 2: Yes ... he is right. The lesson was more interesting but...

Teacher: What do you mean ‘interesting but...’. You mean that

hesitation/difficulty

positive/interesting

there was some kind of difficulty?

Pupil 2: Difficulty... Well ... It wasn't exactly "difficult"!

Teacher: Do you think that it's a matter of time...I mean if we use songs more often we will get used to them more... and this will minimize any problems?

Pupil 1: Yes... And we love songs. (smiling)

positive/like songs

I asked how they would respond to certain stimuli, making a conscious effort to encourage them not to be judgemental about other pupils' views that were expressed,

Christos: Come on ... you can't believe that you could manage if I didn't tell you that you had to colour its socks ...

Dimitris: What do you mean...? It was clear... I didn't need your help...

Christos: ... (laughs are being heard)...

Teacher: Come on boys... there is no need to laugh at each other! Try to keep in mind that no-one knows everything and if we need a little help it is not ... a disaster!

Focus Group (Fourth grade: 9-10 age group)

What also provoked my interest was the way in which some of the pupils had been so immersed in songs that they had forgotten to complete their written assignment.

Constantia, for example, spoke about the way she was so swept away by the rhythm of the song, she forgot to fill in the missing words, and when she finally started working on it, she did not have time to finish. Consequently, she said she should have concentrated more on her work. If I had noticed that while they were working, I would have reminded her that she should not only listen to the song but also complete the relevant activity. Dimitris expressed similar views. His quote below summarises well the opinion of some of his peers:

'... I was having fun, it was a nice song. It was a modern song and I knew it so I kept singing along... Sorry... I forgot I had to complete my work...'

Findings through triangulating data gave me a rounded and multidimensional account of the changes in emotions, motivation and learning outcomes. I was able to weigh up both positive and negative effects from the information provided by pupils on their attitudes towards language learning through songs, and whether songs livened up to the pace of the lessons and made them relax, or whether they caused stress. Allowing pupils during focus groups to dictate the pace without being rushed or interrupted and encouraging them to feel free to express themselves as if they were talking with a friend without feeling they were being criticised about their preferences and comments yielded important data, as can be seen in the following discussion,:

Part of a focus group with pupils from St'1 aged 12

Teacher: I have been watching you today playing football with the other team, during the break and you were very good! Congratulations!

Christos: But we didn't win...

Rafael: Yes, we should have won. I think our team was better than the other one.

Teacher: Well, we can't always win! The point is that you did your best and let's not forget that the other team was good as well.

(... smiles... nodding their heads, one showing that he didn't agree with me)

...

Teacher: Now... You like playing football I see... How about songs... Do you like songs?

Michales: Mrs Maria ... Have you heard Rihanna's last hit? ...

(... they start talking to each other ... some agree that she is good ... some disagree)

Zoes: I liked Avril Lavigne's song 'I'm with you' although I didn't manage to find all the missing words.

Teacher: Well ... OK! ... I wasn't expecting you to find all the words... Why do you think you didn't manage to find all the words?

Zoes: I think it was a little bit fast. I mean if I had been working on my own at that time, with the chance to listen to the song as many times as I wished ...I would definitely have found all the words'

Rafael: I liked this little guy ... Do you remember Michael? The little cartoon guy who kept repeating ... 'what did you do after that?' ...

(... he keeps repeating the rhythm of the song and the words 'what did you do after that?')

Teacher: Oh... that one... Would you believe that I was thinking a lot about using that song ... I was afraid that maybe some of you would find it a little bit childish! (... smiling...) Did you?

Christos: No...It was fun...

(... they all start imitating the moves of the little man in the video clip and keep saying the words ... what did you do after that...)

All the extensive reading, listening and additional written activities which students engaged in gave me an opportunity to observe how their vocabulary was developing, to monitor progress and evaluate how much had been learned, noting in my personal journal comments and details that would supplement the rest of my data. My personal journal was an additional source of information since there I noted in it everything I witnessed during the lesson time that I judged to be important in terms of reinforcing the other data. Comments like the following added information concerning pupils' reactions and feelings during the learning process:

Personal Journal (Fourth Class: 9-10 age group)

...Pupil Y was really embarrassed. He looked as if he wanted to say something but he didn't dare to do so...

... Pupil x had an ironic expression on his face showing that he really underestimated the other pupil's abilities...

... A talk with them for a few minutes was necessary in order to explain that they should be polite with each other and respect each other...

The findings of this research study have established that the use of songs as developed though different interesting activities are applicable to the primary EFL teaching context. Findings have indicated that a considerable number of learners do not feel stressed or bored, and overall they find songs interesting and motivating learning material. It was also apparent from all the data that songs provided the EFL language learners with an

opportunity to learn not only in a fun but also in a meaningful and memorable way. It also demonstrated that implementing songs in the learning process would be beneficial for grammar and vocabulary learning, as reflected in the observations and discussions with the pupils. The findings thus of this study will have direct implications for language learning and also they could have a potential impact not only on the primary but the wider education sector.

In spite of the fact that the findings of this research demonstrated a generally positive response from the pupils, there were some responses which indicated that the positive effects were constrained by some factors such as the fast rhythm of the songs, the unknown words or the noise created during the use of songs which prevented them from considering songs as applicable to their learning situation. This was confirmed by a few pupils' concerns expressed during the focus group discussions, and it could perhaps discourage them from wanting to work with songs. There is, however, sufficient evidence to support the contention that it is up to the teacher to use songs wisely and implement them in an effective, appropriate and imaginative way through interesting activities, in order to achieve positive results from learners. Consequently, keeping in mind that 'affective learning is also effective learning' (Shen 2009:90), we could say that songs deserve our attention and we should familiarise ourselves with their pedagogical applications in the EFL language classroom.

PART IV

Discussion and Conclusions

CHAPTER 6 – Discussion and Conclusions

Discussion

This study has produced findings that after triangulation confirm to a considerable extent my initial hypothesis that songs can affect the way children feel and think and, as a result, can be a valuable teaching tool. Through their potential to help children internalize positive values, songs have a great deal to offer the EFL classroom. They also help pupils understand grammatical structures and develop their vocabulary acquisition. Observation gave evidence of the improvement that using songs as part of language lessons can make towards the learning and reinforcement of grammatical structures and the building of new vocabulary. Even students of low ability managed to learn something, and this was evident from the completed assignments and the discussions that took place during the focus groups. From these findings, it would be reasonable to suggest that all teachers could adopt song-related activities that would benefit their students.

My research has enabled me to see that pupils need to get away from their course books. I noticed, without consciously trying to, that during break-time, pupils of all three different age groups kept repeating the songs we had used during the lessons, which reinforced my contention that songs helped them to become more receptive to learning and to learn better through enjoying the musical element of the activities. The results from my study also indicated that this finding could apply not only to teenagers but to pupils of 9-12 in the context of Cypriot Primary School Education.

However, Legg's hypothesis concerning the magical attributes songs can have on language learning stating that pupils 'would enjoy the musical element of the activity and therefore

become more receptive to learning' (Legg 2009:3) was only partly substantiated in my study. My observations of pupils during the entire research process led me to the conclusion that even though songs could improve language learning by keeping learners motivated and alert, if the related activities were not engaging and interesting, pupils showed no enthusiasm and results were not positive. This confirms Richards' view that 'learning takes place not merely through good presentation, but through meaningful, spaced repetition of the learning items' (Richards 1969:161), and this alerts us to the need to create engaging and purposeful activities which will keep all pupils focused on their language objectives.

Problems and difficulties encountered

Educational research has been criticized on the grounds that 'there is no theoretically based good practice which defines professional teaching' (Bassey 1995:142). We must, therefore, keep in mind that this research, like many other studies, is only one systematic attempt to understand the educational process and through understanding, improve its efficiency.

Songs were carefully chosen and adapted in the language classroom, in order to ensure that they did not contain unfamiliar grammatical structures or difficult vocabulary. However, it was not possible to rule out some negative outcomes. My own experience reflected that of Jolly who found that 'some songs could deviate from the desired phonological patterns or the ordinary syntactic arrangement, while others could contain words or expressions inappropriate to the main thrust of the particular lesson' (Jolly 1975:14). Weaver's opinion added to my own experience that 'pop songs may present problems for the teacher because of the uncontrolled vocabulary, colloquialism and slang and more advanced grammatical structures' (Weaver 1993:101).

As an insider, aspects of this work were facilitated by the fact that I was likely to come across interesting and potentially relevant data during the course of my normal duties. Unlike an external researcher, every moment of my professional life could generate data since pupils could approach me at any time in order to express their enthusiasm or dissatisfaction with specific songs we had used during lesson time or I could hear them singing the songs we had used in class outside in the playground during break-time.

‘The interventions of outsiders may introduce significant distortions (Kemmis 1988:176) in combination with reactivity which can be a potential source of error, as it can ‘lead to false inferences being drawn from the data, which then go on to have an impact on conclusions’ (OU Study Guide 2007:121). This was a major concern. I needed to address whether the pupils being studied were affected by the fact that they knew they were part of a research study. I would tentatively conclude that the research process did not affect the observed behaviour, since I was their teacher and not an unknown person, and furthermore the lesson was carried out as usual with the only difference being the existence of a video camera, which after the first lesson did not appear to be intrusive. It may well be the case that the fact that I kept the video camera in the classroom even if I was not videotaping the lesson and the fact that I was their EFL teacher minimized the negative reaction towards it, since the lesson was carried out in the same way as usual and with the same teacher, and there were no strangers observing.

With regard to the tools being used, audio recordings were not able to provide important non-verbal and contextual information. For that reason I decided to use video instead of audio recordings during lesson observations. However, in order to make pupils feel relaxed enough to talk and elaborate on their personal thoughts and worries, I decided to use audio

recordings during focus groups. This is where notes from my personal journal were a useful additional tool, which also helped to triangulate the data. Data from focus groups were of considerable value but were also by no means unproblematic. One obvious reason for this was that pupils might not necessarily have told me the truth about what they did, thought or felt. It was possible that pupils might give answers which they thought were the *correct* ones instead of saying what they really felt or thought maybe in order just to satisfy me, as their teacher. For this reason I kept reassuring them that there were no right or wrong answers and that what I needed from them was just their honest thoughts and feelings.

Even though most of the students loved using songs and enjoyed the related activities, some of them found the whole process embarrassing and childish and did not want to participate at all. However, during the focus groups they were more positive, maintaining that the activities were interesting and useful for learning grammar and vocabulary. Those pupils, despite being very good at English, were inhibited by shyness and did not therefore feel, as they stated later on, very comfortable about being videotaped. It was observed during the lesson that they kept trying to hide behind other pupils. The knowledge that they were being observed had reactive effects, with the result that they said what they thought I wanted them to say. I, therefore, used a combination of methods given the contention that ‘these may complement one another and provide a more complete picture of an event’ (Open University 2001:212). In order to improve the reliability of the responses, as mentioned earlier, I triangulated the data. This meant that I was not relying on one tool i.e. focus groups only, but on three tools - focus groups, questionnaires and observations. The observations in particular gave me clear evidence of pupils’ reactions to the use of song and whether they felt positive or negative towards them.

I needed to find a way to study the cases of ‘difficult’ pupils who had behavioural problems that disrupted others, and who had been observed to be having difficulty following the rest of the class because of their lack of ability, or who were too embarrassed to participate in any relevant activities. Using an ethnographic framework in my main study I attempted, through a combination of both quantitative and qualitative data, to measure the effectiveness of working with songs in the EFL classroom with all pupils. The focus group discussions and pupils’ own notes in their personal diaries would helped me find out (1) if indeed a motivating language learning environment could be created through the use of songs in the classroom and if it could make pupils relax and thus retain their attention better which would lead to (2) improved grammar and (3) vocabulary acquisition.

An additional problem I anticipated was the noise that students made while singing which might have disturbed other classes nearby or even lead to unruly behaviour. Nevertheless, as Adkins states: ‘noise is involvement, sometimes messy, but if the end product is students speaking English, we have indeed accomplished our goal’ (Adkins 1997:9). The use of headsets while listening to songs was of great value while students were working on song activities, giving them the chance to hear the song as many times as they wished without being disrupted by noise. This also minimized the noise for other classes, although in order not to disturb any neighbouring classes, lessons took place in the Computer lab which is remote from all other classrooms except the Science lab.

The greatest problem with transcribing was potential loss of information. In order, therefore, to conduct a fully-fledged qualitative investigation, transcripts of the recordings needed to include asides, coughs, yawns, laughter, even pauses and any other relevant reactions of pupils during lesson observations. Due to the large amount of data being gathered in cases where qualitative data was mainly intended to provide additional

illustration or clarification, I decided not to transcribe everything from the lesson or the focus groups, but to include only what would add relevant information and address the research questions. In practice, this meant adding details from my personal journal while transcribing recordings, which would substantiate the findings.

Difficulties were also encountered while collecting pupils' diaries, since although they were supposed to be completed by pupils by the end of the lesson about five minutes before the break, I did not collect them at that point, as some pupils asked for more time at home to complete them. It later transpired that some were rushing in order to finish and not lose any precious time from their break, and consequently leaving out important notes and comments on their feelings and general reactions to the use of songs. Others were having to complete their diary at home and kept forgetting to bring it in. This resulted in my not being able to gather enough information to make a significant contribution to the data from other instruments. As a result, the inclusion of pupils' diaries in the study did not prove to be as useful as expected in the assessment of emotions and did not elucidate in detail the emotional experiences that were expected to be reported. Some of the pupils were unable to complete them or did not write down the things that would contribute to a more comprehensive picture of the learning situation. There were also some irrelevant, personal comments which did not add any further data to my research. I was not, therefore, able to reflect systematically on their experiences, and the diaries did not provide me with the opportunity to easily re-evaluate my beliefs and conceptions of classroom roles and relationships.

Gathering data from research diaries was, as we have seen, not unproblematic, since it raised questions about validity. As Dörnyei (2007:158) says: diary studies are 'vulnerable to honest forgetfulness, where participants fail to remember the scheduled response times

or fail to have the diaries at hand'. For that reason it was essential for me to complete all my statements right after the lesson observation in order not to forget anything that might later turn out to be important. At a later stage of the study, in order to fill in gaps that could arise in the diary entries⁶, I followed up with open-questionnaires and focus groups.

Limitations – Future directions

The findings of this study have to be viewed within the limitations of the research. Given the fact that some songs may deviate from the desired teaching grammar and vocabulary patterns, while others may contain words or expressions inappropriate to the main thrust of the particular lesson, it cannot be said there are no possible negative effects from using songs in language teaching. Thus success largely depends on the teacher who makes the selection, and the way in which he or she integrates them into the teaching and learning process.

Another limitation which might have affected the generalizability of this study could be the fact that in this investigation, exposure to songs occurred over a relatively short period, and there was insufficient time to observe the changes in the pupils' motivation and ability to acquire grammar and vocabulary over time. The outcome of this study may have been affected by the limited period of time available for pupils to be involved with the use of songs.

It is also worth considering confounding factors that may possibly have contributed to the positive effect observed. The fact that no control group was included because of parental objections means that an important data collection method had to be abandoned and this

⁶ These gaps could have arisen either through the fact that I was at the same time the teacher and the observer, so I could have forgotten something I needed to write down, or I could have missed something out while observing their behaviour.

may have constituted a limitation. However I tried to balance this by including non-music lessons where songs were not used and lessons where songs were used in order to compare pupils' learning achievement (see Table 3.2 Lesson Schedules). We cannot exclude, however, the possibility that my own enthusiasm and desire to have a positive result might have affected my behaviour in the classroom, since I may have shown more enthusiasm in a song-based class than when using only the textbook. Although this factor cannot be eliminated from the present study, future investigations might attempt to remove this possibility by using control groups.

Further consideration should be given to another drawback of observations since using this instrument the specific types of behaviour included in the schedule were not sufficient enough to describe behaviour adequately. In addition, in terms of individual pupils, 'we cannot tell precisely when in a lesson he began and ended each instance of his disruptive behaviour' (Wilkinson and Birmingham 2003:131).

Although focus group research has many advantages, as with all research methods, there are limitations. 'By its nature focus group research is open-ended and cannot be entirely predetermined' (Millington 2011:56). Thus, even though I tried to carefully plan and moderate the discussion, and had predefined questions, I had less control over the data produced, since I had to allow participants to talk to each other, ask questions and express doubts and opinions, which created some difficulties in keeping participants focused on the research topic.

There are other difficulties for the EFL primary teacher that need to be considered. To maintain variety in the classroom, a good repertoire of songs is essential, since interest in the same song can soon fade if it is used too often, minimizing motivation and the potential

for positive learning outcomes. Although songs can have the advantage of ‘facilitating language development, and above all, fostering positive attitudes towards learning’ (Batista 2008:156), as Millington points out, ‘no matter how enjoyable or memorable, singing songs in itself will not teach anyone to use the language, and will not give students the ability to communicate in another language’ (Millington 2011:139). This highlighted the need for a variety of interesting and carefully designed activities for this research study, bearing always in mind that no matter ‘how much fun it is to sing and listen to them, or how ‘energizing’ the change of pace might be’ (Murphey 1992b:6), you always have to remember that songs alone cannot teach pupils how to use language.

An additional strand which was expected to be further studied in my main study was whether the engagement with songs could support the acquisition of language skills in the case of pupils with special needs. The idea that musical experience might be used to support special needs pupils was originally developed in my mind suggesting that a blend of music in their learning process could increase their attention, while improving their language development. In order to achieve this I had to get permission first from the Special Education teacher in our school who gladly accepted to get involved in the research. However, the parents of these pupils unfortunately did not consent to having their children observed and videotaped in order to be studied for this research project. This resulted in my having to change my plans and exclude any pupil with special needs from my main study. This could be an area for future research and detailed study.

There is a clear need for additional research on this topic, involving a larger number of teachers and pupils from different schools in order to ‘speak to situations beyond the one immediately studied’ (Schofield 1989:186). This might include other schools in Cyprus, not only in the primary education sector but also in the elementary and high-school sectors.

It is hoped, however, that this research will be useful as a starting point for future research in this area, and that it will encourage more research within the field in general, beyond the Cypriot EFL context. Having given presentations on my research topic during the past two years, not only in Limassol but also in Nicosia, the capital of Cyprus, it has emerged that not only primary but also high school teachers are interested in implementing songs linked to relevant activities in their classes. The results, therefore, of this study would provide a useful source of information for a wider teaching audience on the ways a teacher can keep pupils interested and motivated, giving them the chance to learn both grammar and vocabulary in a more fun and enjoyable way.

Recommendations for other primary English language teachers

Through my recent personal experience I have come to agree with what Arnold (1999) states in her book that ‘as teachers, we need to be concerned with learners’ emotional IQ, but no less with our own’(Arnold 1999:107). A teacher who is happy in a classroom can make pupils feel happy too, helping them to learn through a motivating learning atmosphere. Songs gave me energy, kept me working, kept me happy and using them in my classroom enabled me to transmit this energy to my pupils too. Using songs in the classroom could be a way for a teacher to sustain a positive atmosphere helping pupils who are bored, and the ones who are not willing to participate, to enjoy a sense of happiness during the EFL lesson.

Although this research study showed that the use of songs can help pupils in learning English in a more enjoyable and easy way, a teacher must take into consideration that the use of songs could generate some barriers. This study allowed me to identify strategies for song integration and as a result it can be a source of inspiration and guidance for future use by other teachers. This thesis can provide an EFL teacher with ideas for different activities,

awareness of the possible problems that could arise during the teaching process and ways to deal with them.

Each teacher should be aware of their pupils' needs and interests and should try to take them into account when choosing songs and related activities. A good way is to allow pupils to suggest their own songs. They should have the opportunity to bring to the classroom the songs they like. Giving them the opportunity for free choice could make them more motivated but the teacher should study the suggested songs carefully and decide whether they match the lesson's needs and of course the pupils' language skills. A creative way of getting pupils involved in the learning procedure proved to be their experience in creating their own song in which they applied their new vocabulary and grammar (see 'Strauss the mouse' a story/song created by pupils mentioned in Chapter 2). This encourages pupil interaction, and supports our goal in the classroom to create an environment that both promotes a cooperation and collaboration among learners allowing pupils to learn in an easier way.

The aim should be to use songs in order to add substantively to the language curriculum and not merely for their own sake. The combination of songs and interesting activities can provide an environment rich in various opportunities for language learning and a teacher can find such activities and suggestions for the way songs can be used into the EFL procedure in Appendix C. Songs should support and add to the language lesson by providing a purposeful activity for our learners, engaging them in enriching and enhancing learning experiences. Teachers should see songs as a tool and look for the best way to use them to enhance the rest of the language lesson. It is important not to force pupils to use them if they don't like them allowing them if they wish to follow the activities included in their teaching course books.

Teachers also need to think about classroom management procedures for the use of songs making sure that pupils, either as individuals, peer pairs or small groups, take advantage of the learning opportunities feeling comfortable using songs. However, this could create too much noise if not managed carefully and could disturb other classes. Good preparation is essential, starting from the necessary equipment that should be available to pupils to use, like headsets which would allow them to listen to the songs without creating any disturbing noise. Teachers also have to help pupils to realise that using songs is a part of the learning procedure. Using them often enough would get them accustomed to the use of songs in order not to overreact when listening to them.

More importantly teachers should remember that not everyone enjoys singing or can sing in tune. As a result pupils must not be made to sing if they do not wish to do so and we should take care not to lose the point by becoming overly focused on sounds/singing since our aim is to help them with their vocabulary and grammar. As a result the activities should be serving the intended purpose in order to facilitate the EFL teaching plan and these activities should be appropriate to the pupils' age in order to have an impact on learning. In order to minimize the possible problems teachers could integrate the use of computers in their EFL teaching since pupils get easily bored by using the same written activities. When combining songs and computer activities teachers should not assume that all pupils have sufficient background in using computers. It is important to know what pupils can do with computers, to observe them and have a sense of their capabilities. Through observation we can make sure that they are both capable of and interested in completing their activities.

A significant recommendation though for teachers who are willing to use songs in their EFL classroom would be to enjoy the whole procedure of implementing songs, conveying this feeling of joy to their pupils in order to enhance language learning. This useful tool should be exploited and used thoughtfully in the learning experience by teachers tailoring specific activities to the needs and demands of their own pupils. By providing them with a variety of learning activities and suitable songs, ensuring that they are feeling no pressure or stress can lead to greater participation and successful grammar and vocabulary learning.

From these findings, it would be reasonable to suggest that all EFL primary and even high school teachers might find it useful to adopt song-related activities that would benefit their students. Several ideas for future research concerning the impact songs can have either on speaking or listening skills were generated, since many of the pupils I observed improved their speaking as well as grammatical and vocabulary skills. I will continue to present my findings in different seminars and conferences, extending my ideas by adding more relevant literature or by additional studies which could usefully be developed, including the opportunities that songs can create for EFL learners to develop speaking and listening skills. It is also hoped that my study will provoke an interest in EFL teachers who can utilise the work presented in this study to further enhance their work in the classroom. Even pupils who had difficulty keeping up showed improvement in terms of dealing with grammatical structures. Further research will be required to find out what to do in situations where teachers or students do not like songs or suffer from amusia, and where this is the case, how best to deal with their preferences. My own experience did not reveal any problems of this nature, but it is possible that researchers who choose to replicate my study, perhaps in a different context, might have a different experience.

Conclusion

This study did not only help my professional growth, but at the same time it was personally satisfying in helping me to realise the importance of both the cognitive and affective sides of learning. It also taught me how essential it is to be aware of pupils' needs and offer them the opportunity to learn according to their own language learning interests, and maximise their potential for learning. Incorporating songs with linked activities into EFL lessons helped to create an effective learning system and encourage positive emotions which were influential in 'opening the mind to learning' (Hansen 1999:214). Through analysing both quantitative and qualitative data I came to the conclusion that it is important to offer pupils learning experiences which are meaningful and relevant to their interests, minimizing their anxiety and stress, and, from the teacher's standpoint, always keeping in mind their 'emotional intelligence, as this can make a great deal of difference in the language learning process from the point of view of the learner' (Arnold and Brown 1999:4).

The findings from this study demonstrated the benefits for language teachers of drawing on 'the pedagogical applications of music in language classes and the effect/s of music on thought and behaviour of language learners' (Mashayekh and Hashemi 2011:2189), in order to create an effective teaching method and 'increase sensibility, aid memory, improve concentration' (Fonseca-Mora 2011:104). In summary the benefits to primary learners of using songs in the EFL class are:

- increased motivation through arousing positive emotions which can lead to
- a reduction in anxiety, resulting in
- learning of grammar and vocabulary through a method that is effective, enjoyable and easy to use.

In line with Fonseca's contention that 'appropriate selection of music and its incorporation in lessons can be beneficial for students' (Fonseca 2011:106), teachers need to pay close attention to the selection of appropriate songs, so that pupils of lower ability do not have to cope with fast speeds which prevent them from following the words, and can cause stress and anxiety. It is incumbent on every teacher to select songs which are suitable for the age-group and language level of their pupils.

Songs can provide this opportunity for innovative learning to pupils if they are 'based around a theme or topic that can provide the context for vocabulary learning' (Millington 2011:135), and it would seem that this also applies to learning grammar. If they are selected carefully, they can complement the target grammar and vocabulary, although sometimes they can cause difficulties for language learners due to words that are hard to understand. The challenge for teachers is 'finding and selecting songs that are suitable both in terms of vocabulary and topic' (Millington 2011:136) and designing differentiated activities for all ability ranges.

Keeping in mind the 'negative relationship between anxiety and performance' (Oxford 1999:60) in language performance, our aim as language teachers should be to help pupils of all abilities to develop confidence and increase their motivation, particularly those with low self-esteem due to their negative beliefs about themselves as language learners. At the other end of the spectrum are the very able and high achieving pupils who also need to be constantly kept motivated and engaged in activities that might seem easy and could lead to boredom. Using songs with well-designed linked activities can reduce anxiety, keep pupils of all levels motivated and improve grammar and vocabulary in an enjoyable and interesting way. As Arnold suggests: 'when positive emotions are involved, learning is reinforced' (Arnold 1999b:264).

‘Hargreaves claims that the effectiveness of teaching in schools would be substantially improved if it were a research-based profession’ (Hammersley 1997:19). A review of the literature revealed that there are no studies investigating the relationship between grammar and vocabulary learning and anxiety at primary level. This could offer a future direction for a new research study. A significant amount of research still needs to be done. Our task, therefore, as language teachers is to keep researching in order to find methods that will lead to effective language learning and create positive attitudes to learning among our pupils. Moreover, I would welcome being personally involved in designing research projects that would ‘shed more light on this fascinating subject’ (Fox and Perret 2006:181) since it can lead to the development of more pedagogically effective teaching strategies.

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Appendices

Appendix A – (*Consent Form sent to Ministry of Education – translated from Greek*)

Research Applicant: Maria Diakou
Personal Folder Number: 7252

Research Project Title: The value of using songs to develop language skills in the EFL classroom

Home Address: Dalias 8
Ekali
3110 Limassol

School Working at: 25th Primary School of Limassol

Telephone: 99699484
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6th of August 2009

REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
Office of Primary Education

1434, Nicosia

Subject: Permission to conduct research in Limassol Primary Schools

I am a Primary School Teacher in Limassol, doing my EdD (Doctorate in Education) at the Open University, UK. I am writing this letter, in order to obtain permission for conducting research in primary schools in Limassol.

My study will try to find out whether songs have any impact on learning English as a Foreign Language. More specifically, I will try to focus on whether songs can arouse emotions in young learners, and have a positive impact on learning which may help them develop good language skills, particularly with respect to grammar and pronunciation.

This proposed research study will focus on the following main research questions:

- (1) Can the use of songs in the EFL classroom have a positive effect on emotions and language learning?
- (2) Can the use of songs in the EFL classroom reinforce the grammatical structures being taught?

(3) Can songs create opportunities for EFL learners to develop speaking skills?

Quantitative and qualitative methods will be used to collect evidence:

- Observation notes will be made on how learning using songs can become an enjoyable experience, providing opportunities for collaborative pair work and also providing a respite for students from the traditional school programme.
- Oral interviews will also be conducted with students and teachers to investigate their thoughts about integrating songs into language learning.
- A detailed questionnaire will also be given to both teachers and students in order to test more closely their attitudes towards the use of songs.

When the research project starts, I agree to abide by the standards of professional conduct while working in the schools. Furthermore, I agree to send a copy of the study results to the Ministry Of Education after completion of the study for any future use.

I understand that any unauthorized disclosure of confidential information is illegal and that participation in a research study by students, parents, and school staff is strictly voluntary.

In addition, I understand that any data that I, or any authorized representative, may generate from data collection throughout the duration of the research study are confidential, and the data are to be protected. I will not distribute to any unauthorized person any data or reports that I have access to or may generate using confidential data. I also understand that students, schools, or the district may not be identified in the research report. Data with names or other identifiers will be disposed of when their use is complete.

I believe that the findings from this study will encourage teachers to reflect on their own practice and make beneficial adjustments.

Yours sincerely
Maria Diakou

Appendix B – (*Consent Form sent to pupils’ parents – Translated from Greek*)

CONSENT FORM

This is a letter to inform you about a study of English as a second language in which we would like your child participate. The study is part of my Doctorate in Education which I am taking at the Open University, UK. This research project is designed to examine the effects of using songs on pupils’ emotions and whether the positive climate created by the use of songs can make learning grammar and vocabulary easier.

Lessons will be video-taped for further study. Children’s participation in this research will consist of observations, focus groups and questionnaires. Further details will be added from pupils’ personal diaries to be completed by the end of each video-taped lesson. The focus groups will concentrate on children’s perceptions and attitudes towards the use of songs in class. They will be scheduled at a convenient time, according to the children and their teacher’s timetables. Anything the children say will remain confidential. All data will be anonymous and will only be used for this research project purposes.

A summary of the research findings will be available upon request.

From this research project we hope to make learning a foreign language easier and less stressful for students.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information above and have agreed to give permission to your child to participate in the research project.

Thank you
Maria Diakou

Signature of parent

Date

P.S If you need further information please contact me at KE’ Primary School.

Appendix C

Activity types that support the use of songs

	Activity type	Description
1.	Group activities	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work on computer activities (e.g. 'musical' computers: they listen to a song and they move around from one computer to another each time the song stops in order to make changes to a picture they have in front of them. Going back to the computer where they started from they have to compare the pictures and write down the changes they can find using simple past tense and present simple.
2.	Computer activities	<p>Pupils use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the movie maker in order to either fill in the uncompleted titles or to move the titles in the right order in order to have them in a logical order. (Example E) - the power point in order to complete missing words and sentences from the slides. (Example B)
3.	Games	<p>Bingo games or Matching games</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupils have to listen to songs where the new vocabulary they learned is being heard and each time they listen to a word which is included as a picture or a written word in their bingo card they have to delete it.
4.	Video clips	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - use the music from a song they like in order to add their own words (practicing either the new vocabulary or grammar they learned) and in order to create their own video clips with the help of the teacher for video recording.
5.	Story telling	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - try to sing the words from a story using the music of their favourite songs. - try to create their own story-songs which they can later illustrate with their own drawing. (Example-Figure 2.1)
6.	Written activities	<p>Pupils:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fill in written activities (worksheets: drawing according to a song they listen to, completing missing words, completing crosswords according to either one song or a combination of different parts of different songs) (Example A/Example C/Example D)

(Example of activities with songs-Example A)



<http://www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish>
LearnEnglish Kids
Songs

Animal House



<http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-animal-house>

1. Draw lines between the animals and the first letters of their names

b	d	g	h	k	l	t

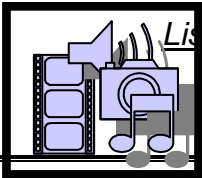


2. Listen to the song - Draw lines - Where are the animals?

k _____		d _____		
h _____				
b _____ 	b _____	t _____	l _____	

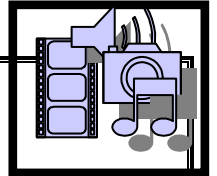
3. Can you put any more animals in the house? Perhaps there's a cat in the cupboard, or a tarantula on the table!

The activity was found online at <http://www.britishcouncil.org/kids-songs-animal-house>

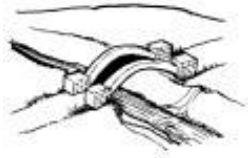


Listen to the song and complete the gaps with verbs in the Present Continuous.

I'm with you – Avril Lavigne



I'm _____ on a



It's a damn



night

_____ to figure out this life



I'm _____ in the dark

Won't you take me by the



I _____ that you'd be here by now

Take me somewhere new

~~I KNOW~~

who you are

But I... I'm with you.



There's nothing but the



I'm _____ for a place



No _____ on the ground



I'm _____ but there's no sound

Is anybody here I know
'cause nothing's _____ right



Isn't anyone _____ to _____ me ?

And everything's a



Won't somebody _____ take me

And no one likes to be



Isn't anyone _____ to find me ?

The activity was found online at
http://www.eslprintables.com/worksheets_with_songs/avril_lavigne/

(Example of activities with songs-Example B)

Go through this power point presentation, listen to the song and put the verbs in red colour in the Simple Past Tense.

1 ☆

Return to Sender **bring**
Elvis Presley

give _____ a letter to the postman,
he _____ it his sack.
But in early next morning,
he _____ my letter back.

put

Return to Sender **bring**
Elvis Presley

give _____ a letter to the postman, **put**
he _____ it his sack.
But in early next morning,
he _____ my letter back.

2 ☆

She _____ upon it:
Return to sender, address unknown.
No such number, no such zone.
We _____ a quarrel, a lover's spat
I write I'm sorry but my letter keeps coming back.

write _____

3 ☆

So then I _____ it in the mailbox
And _____ it special D.
But in early next morning
It _____ right back to me.
She _____ upon it: **come**
Return to sender, address unknown.
No such number, no such zone.

drop _____
send _____
write _____

4 ☆

This time I'm gonna take it myself
and put it right in her hand.
And if it comes back the very next day
then I'll understand the writing on it
to sender, address unknown.
No such person, no such zone.

The activity was created by Maria Diakou

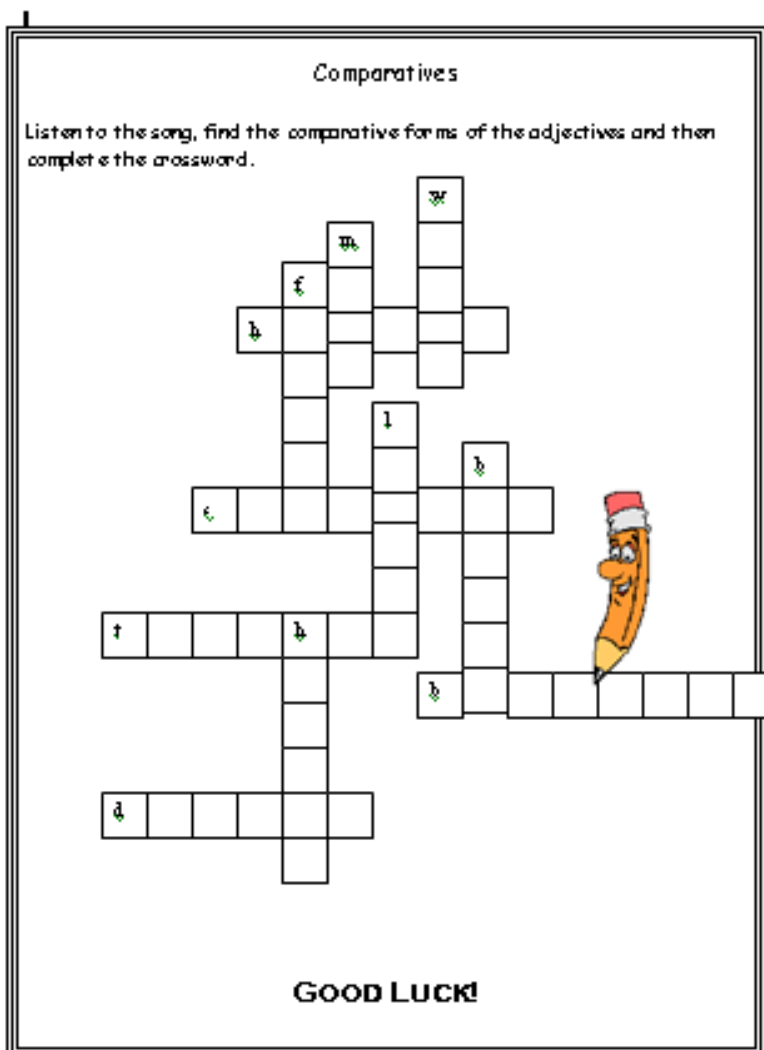
(Example of activities with songs-Example C)

What did he play in the yard? Examples of song activities which were presented by me and discussed with other teachers during seminars and workshops:

Solving crosswords by listening to different parts of pop songs

Using Pop Songs Solving Crosswords

- Anything you can do with a textbook, you can do it with a song or with a video, with the help of technology.
- Comparatives



The activity was created by Maria Diakou

(Example of activities with songs-Example D)

Watch the video, listen carefully to the song and complete.

What did the little man first of all do?

What did he do after he had something to eat?

What time did he arrive at school?

What did he do after he finished school?

What did he do after arriving home?

Answer these questions about yourself?

1. What time did you arrive at school this morning?

2. What did you have for breakfast?

3. Where did you go last Sunday?

4. Did you go to Greece this weekend?

5. Did you have a nice time last Saturday?

You can find the video with the song following this link:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecAHyjh97xA>

The activity was created by Maria Diakou



(Example of activities with songs-Example E)

Movie Maker – Pupils have a video clip of a well known song already copied and pasted in Movie Maker. They have to complete the sentences I have already started up for them filling up the verbs in the Simple Preset Tense.

Tik Tok by Kesha



Lucky by Britney Spears



The activity was created by Maria Diakou using Tik Tok by Kesha and Lucky by Britney Spears from youtube

Appendix D – (Main Study – Pre Questionnaire administered before using songs in class – translated from Greek)

Dear students,

I am asking you to take part in a study I am carrying out into the ways in which songs may help you learn English. The information you give to the questions below will help me to understand whether you think that songs can help you relax and learn better, and whether studying songs in class can help you to improve your English grammar and vocabulary. Read through all the questions carefully before writing your responses, and please answer the questions as honestly as you can. It will only take a few minutes.

I greatly appreciate your participation. Your input will be very important for future planning and for making improvements to the course.

Please be assured that any information you provide will be anonymised and no unauthorized person will have access to any data or reports that I hold.

With thanks and best wishes

Maria Diakou

Your code number:.....

Section One: Biographical Information

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to give information and answer the questions below.)

1. Gender	Boy		Girl	
2. Which class are you in?	D Class		E Class	St Class
3. Have you been having private English Lessons in the afternoon? If so, for how many years have you been doing so?	Yes	1-2 years		No
		3-4 years		
		5-6 years		
4. Is your father's or your mother's first language English?	Mother		Father	
	Yes	No	Yes	No

Section Two:

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)

Where there are statements which require you to rate your answer,
please use the following key:

(1:always, 2:often, 3:sometimes, 4:rarely, 5:never)

Emotions :

1. Think of the times you are learning grammar. Do you find grammar easy to learn?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Think of the times you are learning vocabulary. Do you find vocabulary easy to learn?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Do you feel anxious when learning grammar?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Do you feel anxious when learning vocabulary?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Do you enjoy learning grammar in your language class?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Do you enjoy learning vocabulary in your language class?	1	2	3	4	5

Give your opinion by ticking (√) ONE box ONLY :

1. How do you feel when your teacher is teaching you grammar?

Enthusiastic	
Happy	
Stressed	
Nervous	
Worried	
Confused	
Bored	
Angry	

2. How do you feel when your teacher is teaching you new vocabulary?

Enthusiastic	
Happy	
Stressed	
Nervous	
Worried	
Confused	
Bored	
Angry	

3. Do you think that using songs in language learning would:

make you feel more relaxed?	
help you concentrate more?	
help you memorize more easily what you have learned?	
make the lesson more enjoyable?	
make the lesson much easier?	
confuse you?	
make the lesson more difficult?	
make no difference for you?	

Section Three:

*(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)
Please provide a rating for the statements below using the following key:*

(1:strongly agree, 2:agree, 3:neither agree nor disagree, 4:disagree, 5:strongly disagree)

Grammar :

1. I feel that the textbook or syllabus covers too much grammar in too short a period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Having to remember the	1	2	3	4	5

rules of grammar makes me feel stressed.					
3. Memorizing the rules of grammar helps me to learn grammatical structures more easily.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Songs make learning grammar seem easier.	1	2	3	4	5

Section Four:

*(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)
Please provide a rating for the statements below using the following key:*

(1:strongly agree, 2:agree, 3:neither agree nor disagree, 4:disagree, 5:strongly disagree)

Vocabulary :

1. I feel that the textbook or syllabus covers too much vocabulary in too short a period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Having to remember new vocabulary makes me feel stressed.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Memorizing new vocabulary helps me to learn vocabulary more easily.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Songs make learning new vocabulary seem easier.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking part in this research study. Your participation is important and much appreciated.

Maria Diakou

Appendix E – (Main Study – Post Questionnaire administered after using songs in class – translated from Greek)

Dear students,

Completing this questionnaire is the last phase of the study which I am carrying out in order to find out the ways in which songs may help you learn English. The information you give to the questions below will help me to understand whether you think that songs helped you relax and learn better, and whether studying songs in class helped you to improve your English grammar and vocabulary.

Read through all the questions carefully before writing your responses, and please answer the questions as honestly as you can. It will only take a few minutes.

I greatly appreciate your participation. Your input will be very important for future planning and for making improvements to the course.

Please be assured that any information you provide will be anonymised and no unauthorized person will have access to any data or reports that I hold.

With thanks and best wishes

Maria Diakou

Your code number:.....

Section One:

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)

Where there are statements which require you to rate your answer, please use the following key:

(1:always, 2:often, 3:sometimes, 4:rarely, 5:never)

Emotions :

1. Think of the times you had to learn grammar through songs. Did you find grammar easy to learn?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Think of the times you had to learn new vocabulary through songs. Did you find vocabulary easy to learn?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Did you feel anxious when learning grammar through songs?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Did you feel anxious when learning vocabulary through songs?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Did you enjoy learning grammar in your language class using songs?	1	2	3	4	5

6. Did you enjoy learning vocabulary in your language class using songs?	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Give your opinion by ticking (√) ONE box ONLY :

1. How did you feel when your teacher was teaching you grammar using songs?

Enthusiastic	
Happy	
Stressed	
Nervous	
Worried	
Confused	
Bored	
Angry	

2. How did you feel when your teacher was teaching you new vocabulary using songs?

Enthusiastic	
Happy	
Stressed	
Nervous	
Worried	
Confused	
Bored	
Angry	

3. Do you think that using songs in language learning:

made you feel more relaxed?	
-----------------------------	--

helped you concentrate more?	
helped you memorize more easily what you have learned?	
made the lesson more enjoyable?	
made the lesson much easier?	
confused you?	
made the lesson more difficult?	
made no difference for you?	

Section Two:

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)
Please provide a rating for the statements below using the following key:

(1:strongly agree, 2:agree, 3:neither agree nor disagree, 4:disagree, 5:strongly disagree)

Grammar :

1. I felt that through songs we tried to cover too much grammar in too short a period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Having to remember the rules of grammar through songs made me feel stressed.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Having to remember the rules of grammar through songs made learning much easier.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Songs made learning grammar seem easier.	1	2	3	4	5

Section Three:

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)
Please provide a rating for the statements below using the following key:

(1:strongly agree, 2:agree, 3:neither agree nor disagree, 4:disagree, 5:strongly disagree)

Vocabulary :

1. I feel through songs we tried to cover too much vocabulary in too short a period of time.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Having to learn new vocabulary through songs made me feel stressed.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Memorizing new vocabulary through songs made learning much easier.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Songs made learning new vocabulary seem easier.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank you for taking part in this research study. Your participation is important and much appreciated.

Maria Diakou

Appendix F – (Main Study – Open-ended Questionnaire – translated from Greek)

Dear students,

*These **open-ended questions** are part of the post-questionnaires you have already completed in the final stage of the study which I am carrying out in order to find out whether songs can help you learn English and if so, in what ways. The information you give to the questions below will help me to understand whether or not you think that songs helped you relax and learn better, and whether studying songs in class helped you to improve your English grammar and vocabulary. I am also interested in finding out about any negative reactions you may have had about using songs in class to learn English. Read through all the questions carefully before writing your responses, and please answer the questions as honestly as you can. It will only take a few minutes.*

I greatly appreciate your participation. Your input will be very important for future planning and for making improvements to the course. Please be assured that any information you provide will be anonymised and no unauthorized person will have access to any data or reports that I hold.

With thanks and best wishes

Maria Diakou

Your code number:.....

Section One:

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)

1. Please tick any positive and/or negative factors about the use of songs to learn English grammar:

Positive Effect:

1. Learning grammar through songs makes the lesson more fun.
2. Learning grammar through the use of songs is becoming easier
3. Repetition in songs helps me memorize new grammatical structures.
4. The use of songs relaxes me and as a result it helps me learn in a more effective way.
5. I am doing something different instead of following the traditional way of teaching and learning.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

6. Other:

6.

Negative Effect:

1. The language being used is difficult and this makes it hard for me to follow.
2. I do not like songs, so the use of songs in the lesson time does not make the lesson more interesting for me.
3. The noise being caused by the use of songs is disturbing.
4. The rhythms are too fast for me to follow.
5. I do not like the songs we are using in class.

6. Other:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

1. Please tick any positive and/or negative factors about the use of songs to learn English vocabulary:

Positive effect:

1. Learning new vocabulary through songs makes the lesson more fun.
2. Learning new vocabulary through the use of songs is making learning easier.
3. Repetition in songs helps me memorize new vocabulary.
4. The use of songs relaxes me and as a result it helps me learn in a more effective way.
5. I am doing something different instead of following the traditional way of teaching and learning.
6. Other:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Negative Effect:

7. The language being used is difficult and this makes it hard for me to follow.	1.
8. I do not like songs so the use of songs in the lesson time does not make the lesson more interesting for me.	2.
9. The noise being caused by the use of songs is disturbing.	3.
10. The rhythms are too fast for me to follow.	4.
11. I do not like the songs.	5.
12. Other:	6.

1. Mention any other factors that might have impacted **positively** on your attitude towards the use of songs (if you have any prior musical knowledge/experience e.g. playing a musical instrument, encouragement from your parents) or **negatively** (no musical ability: dislike songs, lack of parental involvement)

Factors that have impacted positively on my attitude towards the use of songs:

1. I have musical knowledge (I am taking music lessons).	1.
2. I play a musical instrument.	2.
3. My parents have encouraged me to take music lessons or play any instrument.	3.
4. My teacher was very enthusiastic/positive about the use of songs.	4.
5. I like music, I like playing a musical instrument.	5.
6. Other:	6.

Factors that have impacted negatively on my attitude towards the use of songs:

1. I don't have any musical ability.
2. I don't like songs and music generally.
3. No one at home likes music or has any involvement with songs or music.
4. My teacher was not very enthusiastic about the idea of using songs during lesson time.
5. I don't feel comfortable when listening to songs or singing because I don't have a nice voice.
6. Other:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

1. Do you have any suggestions that would make the English lesson more fun and relaxed for you?

(Tick (✓) the appropriate box to answer the questions in this section.)
 (1: always, 2: usually, 3: sometimes, 4: rarely, 5: never)

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Use games during the lesson					
2. Integrate technology during the lesson time					
3. Have more group work					
4. Get in touch with English language pupils					
Other:					

Thank you for taking part in this research study. Your participation is important and much appreciated.

Maria Diakou

Appendix G – (Main Study – Focus Group Questions – translated from Greek)

Focus Groups questions

Some of the questions for Focus Groups were decided in advance so that I could more easily rate my pupils' answers. By ticking (✓) the appropriate box I noted down their answers to the questions in order to study them more carefully at a later date.

The following key was used:

(1:always, 2:not very often 3:quite often, 4: often 5:sometimes, 6:seldom 7.rarely 8: hardly ever 9: never 10: not sure)

1. Did you enjoy learning English through songs?

- Which ones did you enjoy in particular? Why?
- Were there any you did not enjoy? Why not?

(I will play some songs in order to remind the children)

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

2. Do you believe that songs created a pleasant and supportive atmosphere in the classroom?

- If so, in what way?
- If not, why do you think this was?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

3. Do you believe that songs reduced your anxiety during the language learning process?

- If so, any particular ones?
- Did any have the opposite effect?
- Why do you think this was?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

4. Did you face any difficulties using songs in the lessons?

- If so, what were these?
- Could these difficulties have been avoided? How?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

5. Can you tell us if you found particular kinds of songs helpful for improving your grammar?

- If so, which kinds and how did they help with your learning of grammar?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

6. Can you tell us if you found particular kinds of songs helpful for improving your grammar?

- If so, which kinds and how did they help with your learning of grammar?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

7. Do you believe that songs helped you memorize new vocabulary?

- If so, in what way?
- Which ones were particularly helpful?
- If not, why do think this was?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

8. Do you believe that songs helped you memorize new grammar structures?

- If so, in what way?
- Which ones were particularly helpful?
- If not, why do think this was?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

9. Do you believe that using pictures was important for keeping you interested in the use of songs?

- If so, in what way?
- If not, why do you think this was?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

10. What would make you feel more interested during the EFL lesson time?

Child's Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Appendix H - Example of transcripts from focus groups

English Version

Part of a focus group with pupils from E' aged 10

Andreas: 'I couldn't believe it! I could do something the other kids could. You know I thought that I could do nothing and finally ... I know I didn't do much ... do you believe that I can do better?'

Teacher: 'I certainly do. Do you want to continue using songs during the lesson?'

Andreas: 'Certainly. Can I bring some of my own CDs. You know my favourite singer is Michael Jackson.'

Greek Version

Αντρέας: 'Δε μπορούσα να το πιστέψω! Μπορούσα να κάνω κάτι που έκαναν και τα άλλα παιδιά. Ξέρετε νόμιζα ότι δε μπορούσα να κάνω τίποτα και τελικά ... Ξέρω πως δεν έκανα πολλά πράγματα ... πιστεύετε ότι μπορώ να τα πάω καλύτερα;

Δασκάλα: Και φυσικά το πιστεύω! Θα ήθελες να συνεχίσεις να χρησιμοποιείς τα τραγούδια κατά τη διάρκεια του μαθήματος;

Αντρέας: Φυσικά! Θα μπορούσα να φέρω και μερικά από τα δικά μου CD; Ξέρετε ο αγαπημένος μου τραγουδιστής είναι ο Μάικλ Τζάκσον.

English Version

Part of a focus group with pupils from St' aged 12

Teacher: I have been watching you today playing football with the other team, during the break and you were very good! Congratulations!

Christos: But we didn't win...

Rafael: Yes, we should have won. I think our team was better than the other one.

Teacher: Well, we can't always win! The point is that you did your best and let's not forget that the other team was good as well.

(... smiles... nodding their heads, one showing that he didn't agree with me)

Greek Version

Δασκάλα: Σε παρακολουθούσα σήμερα που έπαιζες ποδόσφαιρο με την άλλη ομάδα κατά τη διάρκεια του διαλείμματος και ήσουν πολύ καλός! Συγχαρητήρια!

Χρίστος: Ναι αλλά ... δεν κερδίσαμε!

Ραφαήλ: Ναι, θα έπρεπε να είχαμε κερδίσει. Νομίζω πως η ομάδα μας ήταν καλύτερη από τους άλλους.

Δασκάλα: Λοιπόν, δε μπορούμε πάντα να κερδίζουμε! Σημασία έχει ότι κάνατε ό,τι μπορούσατε και ας μη ξεχνούμε ότι η άλλη ομάδα ήταν καλή επίσης.

(... χαμογελούν ... κουνούν το κεφάλι τους, δείχνοντας ότι συμφωνούν μαζί με τη δασκάλα)

Appendix I – (Examples of learners’ diary entries)

Learner’s diary entries from pupils from D’ Class aged 9-10

“... I like it, it is fun ...”

“ ... I hope that we keep using songs...”

“ ... Songs are really so amusing...”

Learner’s diary entries from pupils from E’ Class aged 10-11

“... It was good. It was really nice to use something we enjoy anyway to listen to...”

“... I think that I enjoyed it ...”

“... I love songs anyway so it was a very interesting experience...”

“... No, I don’t want to use songs. I get stressed because of the fast tunes which I can’t follow...”

Learner’s diary entries from pupils from St’ Class aged 11-12

“... I enjoyed listening to the pop song. It is something we do not do very often. It was something different, something really interesting ...”

“...Yes! It was great! It was a chance to get out of this old-fashioned books which I don’t like using...”

“ ... I don’t think that it was so easy! I found it a little bit difficult to follow! Difficult words but it was OK. ...”